The Renewal of The Marian Order In 1909 - 1910

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MARIAN PRESS
Marians of the Immaculate Conception
Stockbridge, Massachusetts 01263
2000

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 00-102599
ISBN 0-944203-31-0

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Printed in the United States of America
Stockbridge, Massachusetts 01263

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PREFACE

This collection of documents has extraordinary value. Assembling it required a great deal of research, effort, and time. The resulting book is the best reward for those who have toiled on it. Indeed, what can give greater satisfaction than preparing a good book? This one, although "just" a collection of documents, is an exceptional volume.

The documents collected herein allow us to reconstruct with great accuracy a single but highly dramatic historical moment: the death throes of the Order and its resuscitation when it appeared that nothing could save it from death.

The monastic orders were sentenced to death by a czar's executive order because of their participation in the 1863 uprising. Some dispersed completely, and the monks who were not exiled merged with the lay clergy to the point that for a long time those orders actually ceased to exist in territories subject to Russia. A similar fate seemed destined for the Marians. They were reduced to a single monastery without the right to accept new members, meaning a gradual aging and dying off of the community. It was the specter of the end. The last monk asks a question in one of his letters: "Is there even a spark of hope left or should I let go and prepare two coffins, one for myself and one for the Order?" This decline lasted for almost 50 years!

But then a complex rescue operation begins for the Marians. The last inhabitant of the huge and deteriorating cloister in Mariampole, old and ailing Fr. Wincenty Sekowski, met two people, priests Matulewicz and Buczys, Lithuanians with Polish ties, who would not allow the Order to die. It was their idea. Everything was carried out legally despite the repressive czarist legislation. They were all taking risks: the two priests, their bishops, and Father Sekowski. If it had been revealed publicly, all would have been lost. Neither was it

known what the Holy See would say to the idea of transforming a strict order whose members used to wear white robes into a clandestine society without visible symbols; or what its position would be concerning secrecy and the changes this would bring about in the previous Rule and the whole monastic lifestyle — changes dictated by the need to adapt the Order to prevailing conditions.

All this was happening at a time when contacts were more difficult than ever. The dying monastery was in Mariampole in Lithuania and the two enthusiasts were professors in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg whose teaching duties restricted their freedom of movement while they had to communicate with Warsaw and Rome. The mail worked quite well, but letters were likely to be subject to censorship.

There were few precedents, and it was necessary to explain everything in Rome personally and make sure this was not just a naive although beautiful dream.

Throughout all these precariously delivered letters, half-conspiratorial reports from travels to Rome, communications to the Holy See, pleas for urgency and explanations coming from Rome which failed to be answered in time, requests for permission and granting of such permissions (for example, to deal with certain matters orally instead of in writing as they were too risky for the bishops), eager and enthusiastic reports, messages whose authors and recipients would never suspect that they would constitute priceless documents — throughout all those documents collected together we can see, as in slow motion, the improbable becoming reality.

In fact, the probability that the clandestine Renewal of the dying Order would succeed was scant. As the old General was dying (just one coffin for the moment), there were only two new postulants, not enough to elect his successor.

However, by the grace of God, the improbable turned out to be possible. Today, 85 years later, there are over 500 Marians of various nationalities in 16 countries all over the world.

For the Marians, this Renewal collection is priceless. Complemented by the "spiritual journal" of Fr. Matulewicz written during the same period, it answers the questions of where we come from and where are we going as a community. It contributes to our identity.

However, this is not a book to be read only by the Marians. I recommend it to everyone who is interested in the Church. In this way, the Church can be seen as being like the proverbial universe in a drop of water. We not only can see how great works are made, but also can track the functioning of "The Office": its amazing flexibility, openness to new suggestions, simplicity of procedures, and at the same time its determination in considering consequences and its precision in dealing with matters brought to the attention of the Holy See. Readers uninitiated in the history of the Marians receive valuable guidance to these documents in the extensive Introduction which places them in a broader context of historical events.

After 85 years, does the revived Order fulfill the intentions of its Blessed Renovator? It is not up to us to answer this question. Persistent and thorough source research seems to confirm that it does, at least to some extent. Drawing from the treasury of the past helps us to look into the future.

Rome, August 29, 1994
Rev. Adam Boniecki, MIC
Superior General

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACIVCSVA	—	Archivio della Congregazione per gli Instituti di vita consacrata e le Societa di vita apostolica, Vatican
AGM	—	Archivum Generale Marianorum, Rome
Biskupi	—	Nitecki Piotr, *Biskupi Kosciola w Polsce. Slownik biograficzny* [Bishops of the Church in Poland. A biographical Dictionary]. Warsaw 1992
Constitutiones	—	Constitutiones Congregationis Clericorum Regularium Marianorum sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, Romae 1930
Dziennik	—	Jerzy Matulewicz, *Dziennik duchowy* [Spiritual Journal], Warsaw 1988
EAM	—	Elenchus alphabeticus marianorum ab initio Congregationis usque ad renovationem, Romae 1961 (mimeographed)
EK	—	*Encyklopedia Katolicka* [Catholic Encyclopaedia], vols. 1-6, Lublin 1973-1993
EL	—	*Encyclopedia Lituanica*, vol. 1-6, Boston 1970-1978
IG	—	Institutum Generale
inv.	—	inventory
Kucas	—	Anthony Kucas, *Archbishop George Matulaitis*, Chicago 1981

LVA	—	Lietuvos Valstybinis Archyvas [State Archive of Lithuania], Vilnius.
Marianie	—	Marianie 1673-1973. Collection edited by Rev. Jan Bukowicz and Tadeusz Gorski, Rome 1975
PSB	—	*Polski Slownik Biograficzny* [The Polish Biographical Dictionary], Krakow 1935 — Wroclaw 1991.
Positio	—	Romana seu Kaunen. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Georgii Matulaitis seu Matulewicz [...]
Totoraitis	—	Jan Totoraitis, Zakon Marianow 1864-1909 [The Marian Congregation, 1864-1909], Collectanea Mariana Provinciae Americanae S. Stanislai K., No. 9, Stockbridge, Mass. 1962 (mimeographed)
vol.	—	volume
set	—	archival unit

INTRODUCTION

We offer the readers a volume of documents, most of them translated from Latin, concerning the rebirth of the Congregation of Marian Fathers from 1909 to 1910. The Order was established in the seventeenth century, and it had written a beautiful page in the history of the Church. However, political persecutions in the nineteenth century almost brought it to complete extinction. Owing to the reform carried out by Blessed Jerzy Matulewicz in collaboration with General of the Order Wincenty Sekowski under the guidance of the Holy See, the Order was brought back to life and started to fulfill its mission again.

To help understand what happened during those two years, we have selected documents reflecting the decline and struggle for survival of the Order after 1864 and then, after the Renewal, its steady growth until 1930.

In addition to official documents, there is also a selection of correspondence on this subject between Rev. Matulewicz, General Fr. Wincenty Sekowski, and Rev. Franciszek Buczys. All these letters were conspiratorial, as they dealt with matters forbidden under czarist law. This is why their language is sometimes terse and hard to understand for the uninitiated. The documents and the letters constitute a complete record and complement each other. Therefore, we present them in chronological order.

In documents written in Roman script, we have retained the spelling of names as in the source materials.

[In English, special Polish characters are represented without their diacritical marks and all names are in the nominative case. The few Russian names are transliterated into English spelling. Spelling of geographical names follows the Polish edition, with the exception of well-known places such as Rome which do have their accepted English names. - Translator's note.]

Three libraries have been queried: the Archive of the Congregation of the Religious in the Vatican, the General Archive of the Marian Priests in Rome, and the Lithuanian State Archive in Vilnius, where the resources of the Marian monastery in Mariampole were deposited after they were seized by the Communists.

Some of the documents have been printed in official publications related to the beatification process of Blessed Matulewicz.[1]

We trust that the book will allow us to learn about and understand the Renewal of the Congregation of Marian Fathers while correcting much inaccurate information and false views.

Abolition and an attempt to renew the Order legally

The Congregation of Marian Fathers owes its foundation to Fr. Stanislaw Papczynski. Beginnings of the Institute go back to 1673. Stefan Wierzbowski, the Bishop of Poznan, approved it in 1679 as a diocesan congregation with simple vows; and in 1699 Pope Innocent XII agreed that the Marians would make solemn vows to the Rule of Emulation of the *Ten Virtues of the Most Holy Virgin Mary,* involving dependence on the Reformed Franciscans.[2] In 1723 Pope Innocent XIII approved the constitutions and the Order as exempt from the authority of the bishops.[3] Pope Pius VI in 1786 declared the Marians independent of the Franciscans and in the following year he confirmed their reformed constitutions.[4]

The peak of the Order's growth was in the end of the eighteenth century. In 1781, it had 147 members.[5] The Marians were active in the multinational territories of the Polish Republic as well as in Portugal.

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[1] Documenta responsioni adnexa, pp. 28-51, 115-128, [in:] *Positio*.

[2] Gorski, Tadeusz: *Papczynski Jan*, monastic name: Stanislaw of Jesus Maria (1631-1701), a Piarist monk, subsequently the founder of the Marian Order; a religious writer, [in:] PSB, XXV, pp. 159-161.

[3] Jakimowicz, Boleslaw: *Stabilizacja i rozwój zakonu w XVIII wieku* [Stabilization and Growth of the Order in the 18th Century], [in:] *Marianie*, p. 40.

[4] Ibid., p. 46.

[5] Ibid., p. 48.

They also had a house in Rome. Their work was pastoral, especially among the simple people. They ran schools and they propagated the veneration of the Holy Mother of Immaculate Conception. They prayed for the dead.

Because of unfavorable political conditions, the Order began to decline. In 1798, Napoleon's military chased the Marians out of Rome as foreigners; in 1832 the Russian government closed the monastery in Berezdow in the Volyn; in 1834 the state government liquidated all three Marian centers in Portugal.[6]

On the eve of the sweeping czarist abolition in 1864, the Marian Institute had approximately 80 members[7] in eight monasteries in territories under Russian rule; the entire Congregation was subject to the abolition decrees.

The monastery in Rasno in Polesie was closed by the decree of Governor General Mikhail Muraviev dated September 4/16 [new style/old style], 1864, for participation by the Marians in the January Uprising against the czarist authorities. The other monasteries were located in the Polish Kingdom and the czar's ukase of October 27/November 8, 1864[8] applied to them. Based on this decree, all monasteries were classified as subject to abolition if they had less than eight members and not subject to abolition if they had more monks. In turn, among monasteries not presently subject to abolition, two categories were defined: "supernumerary" with 8 to 13 members, which were not to accept novices and as a consequence were destined for closure as soon as the number of monks decreased to below 8; and "numerary" with 14 or more members, theoretically able to accept novices and therefore meant to exist permanently.[9]

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[6] Gach, Piotr: *Zakon marianów w XIX wieku* [The Marian Order in the 19th Century], [in:] *Marianie*, pp. 72, 83, 84.

[7] Kosmoski, Jan: *I Padri Mariani nell'antica Res Publica di Polonia* "*Rzeczpospolita*" *dal 1787 al 1864*, Roma 1988, typescript, p. 434.

[8] Gach, Piotr: *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[9] Gach, Piotr: *Kasaty zakonow na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej i Slaska 1773-1914* [Abolition of monastic orders in the former territories of the Polish Commonwealth and Silesia, 1773-1914], Lublin 1984, p. 180.

Four Marian monasteries were closed overnight on November 15-16/27-28, 1864, and another one in Iglowka on September 20, 1865, because they had less than eight members. The supernumerary house in Miroslaw was closed on April 24, 1866. Monks from the closed houses were transported to the only "numerary" monastery in Mariampole, in the diocese of Sejny in the Lithuanian territory. Seminarians and novices were transferred to diocesan seminaries; 11 Marians were exiled to Siberia; one each was left to staff the Order's churches; several went abroad. The Order's property was confiscated. In the future, the monks were expected to survive on starvation government pensions. They were made subject to the bishops' jurisdiction.[10]

Between February 1 and 14, 1865, the Bishop of Sejny, Konstanty Lubienski, performed a visitation in Mariampole. He believed that under the exceptional circumstances when he could not communicate with Rome, the rulings of the Tridentine Synod authorized him to extend his jurisdiction even over monks subject to papal law such as the Marians. In fact, the Holy See gave Polish bishops this jurisdiction on January 13 and then repeated it in subsequent months.[11]

Bishop Lubienski, as the delegate of the Holy See, called for the resignation of General Roman Wilczynski and Superior of the monastery in Mariampole Jerzy Matuszewicz.[12] Then he advised the monks to elect a new Superior of the house and they elected Jerzy Czesnas. The Bishop approved him and bestowed on him the authority of the General and local Superior,[13] in accordance with the first Article of the Visitation Decree, viz.: "The office and responsibility of the Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers together with legislative executive and judicial power, including all

[10] Gach, Piotr: *Zakon Marianow*..., pp. 90-91.

[11] Kalowski, Julian: *Uprawnienia nad zakonami udzielone biskupowi przez Stolice Apostolska po 1684 r.* [Authority over Monastic Orders Bestowed upon the Bishop by the Holy See].

[12] Documenta responsioni adnexa, pp. 33-36, [in:] *Positio.*

[13] See Document 2.

privileges, rights, primacy, and authorizations are hereunder transferred to the person of the Superior or Supervisor of the Mariampole monastery connected and unified with this Office." The Council of the Superior had the authority of the General Chapter.[14]

After Fr. Czesnas died, Father Wincenty Sekowski was elected to the office of Superior General, which the Marians announced on November 24, 1892, to Bishop Piotr Wierzbowski, asking him to accept the choice.[15] Father Sekowski was destined to become the foremost figure of the Renewal.[16]

In accordance with the czar's ukase, the Marians were allowed to run a novitiate. In fact, acceptance of candidates was restricted to the point that, during the 40 years of the existence of the monastery, it did not succeed in accepting even a single novice. Thus, as a result of deaths and transfer of priests to the diocese, the Marian community systematically decreased in numbers. In 1865, there were 31 monks in the house. In 1867, there were 24. In 1874, just 14. In 1888, there were 11. In 1892, there were five. In 1897, only three remained.[17] Since for quite some time the monastery did not have the minimum number of eight monks, it could be closed in compliance with the ukase. This happened on September 14, 1904. There was an attempt to sell the buildings to the Orthodox clergy, but as a result of opposition by the local population, they were left with the Catholic parish.[18]

What happened to the Marian Congregation offers a picture of the entire monastic life under the czarist government. At the beginning of

[14] See Document 1, parts 1 and 2.

[15] See Document 3.

[16] Sekowski, Wincenty (1840-1911), born in the village of Aszmonski in the parish of Szumsk in Lithuania, he was educated in the Mariampole high school. He joined the Marian Order in 1848. During 1862-1866 he studied in the Theological Academy in Warsaw. He was ordained as priest in 1864 by Bishop Henryk Plater in the Church of the Holy Cross. In 1892 he was elected Superior General and he performed that function until his death. He died on April 10, 1911. (EAM, p. 48).

[17] Totoraitis, pp. 31-33, 44, 45, 47, 48. According to Rev. J. Kosmowski, there could have been no more than 22 monks in Mariampole in 1865 (*I Padri mariani*..., p. 443).

[18] Totoraitis, pp. 49-50.

the twentieth century, there were just a handful of male monasteries in which a few aged men were living out their days.

The Revolution of 1905 forced the Russian government to assume a more liberal policy. The Marians hoped that they would succeed in renewing the monastery, including the novitiate. Father Sekowski collected several thousand signatures under a petition to Prime Minister Witte. He also sent a few letters to the diocesan authorities. Administrator of the Diocese Jozef Antonowicz also wrote a number of times to the Ministry of Interior Affairs. He received an answer on November 7, 1907: the Department of Religious Affairs announced that, until a new law could be enacted by the Duma, the monastery could not be revived.[19]

Father Andrzej Jurewicz died on August 11, 1908, and Father Maciej Gillis three days later.[20] Only the ailing Fr. Wincenty Sekowski survived. The Congregation was facing extinction. It was at this point that Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz took action to save the Order. He was a native of the Mariampole parish and he grew up in the shadow of the Marian monastery. As a priest, he had received an excellent education and he had extensive connections among Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians. From that point on, he would become the main driving force of the effort to revive the Marians, and he became the successor of Fr. Sekowski as their General.[21]

[19] Ibid. pp. 51-54, Documents 5,7.

[20] EAM, pp. 15, 23.

[21] Matulewicz (Matulaitis, Matulevicius), Jerzy (1871-1927), born in the village of Lugine in the Mariampole parish, he was baptized by Fr. General Jerzy Czesnas, and his religion teacher in high school was Fr. Wincenty Sekowski. He enrolled in the seminary in Kielce. He continued his studies in Warsaw, in St. Petersburg where he was ordained as priest in 1898, and in Fribourg. For many years he collaborated with Blessed Honorat Kozminski and his secret congregations, especially with the Servants of the Heart of Jesus who boarded him and gave him care at 24 Piekna Street in Warsaw from 1904 to 1907. At the same time, he was a social activist, a co-founder of the Association of Christian Workers, and the editor of a bi-weekly, "Labor Comrade." In 1907 he was named professor at the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg. In 1909 he joined the Congregation of Marian Priests. Two years later he was elected its General and performed this function until he died. In 1918-1925, he was Bishop of Vilno and then the Apostolic Delegate to Lithuania. He died in 1927. Pope John Paul II beatified him on June 28, 1987 (PSB, XX, pp. 208-211).

In a letter from St. Petersburg dated September 8/9, 1908, Rev. Matulewicz requested Father General Sekowski for admission to the Congregation of Marian Fathers for himself and for Rev. Franciszek Buczys, his friend and also an alumnus of the Mariampole High School and professor of the Theological Academy, and he declared his readiness to work on reactivation of the Order.[22] Father General Sekowski responded to Rev. Matulewicz's proposals with great joy. It was certainly a harbinger of the realization of his own efforts and the fulfillment of his prayers. In a letter on October 14, 1908, he wrote: "Never in my life, and especially never since I have joined the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin, have I experienced such joy as I did at the moment I read the letter of the Honorable Professor."[23]

The two priests, Matulewicz and Buczys, together with Father General Sekowski, began their energetic efforts. They asked influential people for help — Rev. Zygmunt Chelmicki and Cecylia Plater-Zyberk in Warsaw and Rev. Kazimieras Prapuolenis in Sejny. In November of 1908, Rev. Matulewicz met with an official of the Department of Religious Affairs, Nefedyev, who confirmed the known position of the government: nothing can be done. We need to await action by the Duma.[24] The period of the thaw ended and it was obvious that nothing could be achieved by legal means. On April 24, 1909, the ailing Fr. Sekowski was asking Rev. Matulewicz: "Is there even a spark of hope left or should I let go and prepare two coffins, one for myself and one for the Order?"[25]

Beginnings of the reform of the Congregation of Marian Fathers

Since it was impossible to join the Order legally, Rev. Matulewicz and Rev. Buczys decided that they could achieve their purpose only

[22] See Document 4.

[23] See Document 5.

[24] See Document 4, 6-8; LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 50, pp. 24-25, letter of J. Matulewicz to K. Prapuolenis, [December 7-13, 1908].

[25] See Document 9.

by risking the monastic life hidden from the czarist authorities. In early July of 1909, they went to Mariampole and discussed the entire matter with Fr. General Sekowski. They were encouraged to take this step by the numerous secret female monastic families organized by Fr. Honorat Kozminski, with which they collaborated.

As can be surmised by the letter from Fr. Sekowski to the Pope of July 20, 1909, the emphasis was on protecting the existence of the Congregation, so as to be able to live the monastic lifestyle without any external emblems and to allow Rev. Matulewicz to make his vows without going through a novitiate.[26] For all participants in the meeting, much remained unclear in this matter. This is why they decided to send Rev. Matulewicz to Rome if only he could manage to go during the summer vacation and "if it is so advised in Warsaw."[27]

They meant the Suffragan Bishop of Warsaw. He was a native of the Mariampole area and a good friend of Fr. Sekowski and Rev. Matulewicz as well as of the Marian monastery. At the same time he was responsible for monastic orders in the Warsaw archdiocese.[28] He was thus a person by all means trustworthy and competent. Rev. Matulewicz probably went to see the Bishop on July 12. Their conversation was long and comprehensive. Bishop Ruszkiewicz grasped the matter with understanding and benevolence. He expressed certain reservations, gave advice and assistance.[29] The Marians were an Order approved by the Holy See with their own Rule and constitutions. As the Bishop noted, a "different lifestyle" was proposed, requiring changes in the constitutions which could only be made by the Holy

[26] See Document 13.

[27] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 59, p. 1, letter of Fr. Buczys to J. Matulewicz, July 14, 1909.

[28] Ruszkiewicz, Kazimierz (1836-1925), born in Dzieciolowka near Mariampole. In 1883 he became the suffragan of Warsaw. In 1883-1925 he was the parson of the Holy Cross parish in Warsaw. Because of the ill health of Archbishop Wincenty Popiel (who was losing his sight and memory), from 1905 he was gradually taking over the government of the archdiocese as its Vicar General (PSB, XXXIII, pp. 285-286).

[29] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 99, p. 1, letter of Fr. Buczys to J. Matulewicz, July 13, 1909.

See. He knew from his experience with the female orders that the Holy See was glad to permit such a lifestyle.[30] Therefore, according to the Bishop, "It is important to know how they will look upon such a lifestyle and such a project there."[31] The Bishop advised him to go to Rome. That was what Rev. Matulewicz wanted to do, and he wrote: "We shall know what the Church's will is."[32] Bishop Ruszkiewicz gave Rev. Matulewicz a very flattering letter of introduction to the Congregation of the Religious[33] as well as information about where to go and whom to approach in Rome.[34] It was certainly under the influence of the Bishop that Rev. Matulewicz asked Fr. General Wincenty Sekowski for a letter to the Pope. In his July 20 letter, the General described the sad condition of the Congregation resulting from the unjust laws. He made a plea for extraordinary protection of its existence, and authorized Rev. Matulewicz to act on his behalf in promoting the future existence of the Institute.[35] Rev. Matulewicz also asked the Administrator of the Mohylev Archdiocese for a letter to the authorities to help in obtaining a passport.[36]

Some hesitation concerning the journey was finally dispelled by the July 14 letter from Rev. Buczys in which he described his conversation concerning the project of Marian Renewal with Kaspar Cyrtowt, the Bishop of Samogitia. The Bishop praised the project, although he advised him not to hurry and to act in full knowledge of the Administrator in Sejny.[37] When asked for a letter concerning the

[30] See Document 14.
[31] See Document 12.
[32] Ibid.
[33] See Document 11.
[34] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 99, p. 33, letter of Fr. Buczys to J. Matulewicz, July 16, 1909.
[35] See Document 13.
[36] See Document 12.
[37] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 59, p. 1, letter of Fr. Buczys to J. Matulewicz, July 14, 1909.

need for renewal of the Mariampole monastery, even secretly, he made its issuance dependent on the consent of the Sejny Administrator.[38]

Father Sekowski took exception to Bishop Cyrtowt's advice "not to hurry" by writing a letter advising urgency: "No matter what, please go as soon as possible. Strike while the iron is hot, hurry up because we never know what may happen at any moment. Yesterday, which was Wednesday, I felt very weak, as if under a nervous or some other attack I cannot describe."[39]

The final decision to travel to Rome was made by Rev. Matulewicz in Warsaw during the night of July 18-19.[40]

Having received power of attorney from Fr. General Sekowski and a passport, Rev. Matulewicz set out on his journey on July 24.[41] He arrived in the Eternal City the next day, a Sunday. He stayed in Muller's Bavaria Hotel at Vicolo Alibert. Aided by the Resurrectionist Fathers, on Monday he went to Prelate Giuseppe Antonucci of the Congregation of Studies, to whom he had a letter of introduction. He presented the matter to the Prelate and submitted the papers he brought in order to have them forwarded to the Congregation of the Religious. He tried to meet with the Jesuits: Father Wlodzimierz Ledochowski, an influential figure in the Vatican, and Father Gennaro Bucceroni, expert in monastic law, but they were not in town. However, he did meet several times with Prelate Adam Sapieha from the Roman Curia. From the latter he received essential advice with far-reaching consequences, to approach the Prefect of the Congregation of the Religious, the Spanish Cardinal Jose Vives y Tuto of the Capuchin order, who was knowledgeable about the situation of monastic life under Russian rule and who was also well known for his kindness.[42]

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[38] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 59, p. 3, letter of Fr. Buczys to J. Matulewicz, July 19, 1909.

[39] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, p.?, letter of W. Sekowski to J. Matulewicz, July 22, 1909.

[40] See Document 12.

[41] See Document 14.

[42] See Document 19.

On the same day, July 28, he went to see the Cardinal. This audience was the most important event of the whole sojourn of Rev. Matulewicz in Rome, because it determined the further existence of the Marian Order as well as the shape of its reform. From the first moment, the Cardinal received Rev. Matulewicz not only kindly and with good will, but also with great warmth. He listened carefully to what was being told to him, and to the timid suggestions of changes he added more of his own. The Cardinal praised his desire to preserve the Congregation and emphasized that even the single surviving monk is entitled to live the monastic life. When Rev. Matulewicz mentioned the matter of robes, the Cardinal said: "Why should you wear robes? Dress like all priests do." He promised to allow Rev. Matulewicz to submit his profession without serving his novitiate. He advised that a novitiate be opened in a large city where it would be easier to hide. Finally, he asked Rev. Matulewicz if he knew the Standards of 1901 of the Congregation of the Religious, with which monastic constitutions should comply. When Rev. Matulewicz answered in the affirmative, the Cardinal expressed his view that the old Marian Rule was no longer appropriate, that the Rule should be adapted to current needs and he gave the following advice: "You will do best to compose it all according to the Standards. You may save the old Rule as a keepsake, but the most important things are the constitutions." He also encouraged him to preserve communal life despite the necessity to hide, "because without it there is no monastery." He was also talking about other matters "some of which he almost took out of my mouth" — Blessed Jerzy wrote later.[43]

Leaving Warsaw, Rev. Matulewicz intended only to find out what, where, and how to proceed in the future. But the Prefect of the Congregation advised him at the end of their conversation that being authorized by the General, he should right here in Rome prepare a petition with a listing of all the discussed issues and asking for their resolution, and then have the letter delivered to Undersecretary

[43] Ibid., and Document 15.

Rodolfo Caroli. Rev. Matulewicz departed, expressing gratitude for the Cardinal's kindness and understanding of the situation of monastic orders under the czar's scepter. He already knew that he would resolve everything and bring back a positive answer from Rome, meeting their difficulties halfway and giving great hope.

On Thursday and Friday, July 29 and 30, no supplicants were being received in the Congregation because of official meetings. During those two days, Rev. Matulewicz worked on preparing a letter containing the requests formulated in Mariampole as well as the suggestions of the Cardinal Prefect. Moreover, on Friday he had an audience with Pope Pius X and, as he wrote in the letter to Rev. Buczys of July 31, he received "a benediction for myself and for all those for whom I wanted it."[44] Apparently, he did not present any matters to the Pope.

On Saturday, July 31, he went to Prelate Caroli in the Congregation of the Religious. He handed him the prepared letter, and they had a long conversation. The Undersecretary told him to come back on Monday for the response.

The letter submitted by Rev. Matulewicz on behalf of General Sekowski in the Congregation of the Religious has exceptional importance because it contains the core of all the main features of the renewed Order. It consists of an introduction and four short chapters designated with roman numerals, describing specific issues. In the introduction, Rev. Matulewicz presents himself and declares his power of attorney from the General. He begins each chapter with a description of current conditions of the Orders and of the Marian Congregation in particular. He ends each chapter with specific conclusions.

The letter contains the following requests:

1. Exemption from wearing robes
2. Substitution of simple vows for solemn vows
3. Adaptation of the Marian constitutions to the Standards
4. Profession of vows by Rev. Matulewicz without novitiate
5. Enrollment of Rev. Buczys to the novitiate

[44] See Document 17.

6. Trial enrollment of other candidates
7. Temporary location of the novitiate in St. Petersburg

At the end, he added a request for the Holy See to contact the Order in a discreet manner, either directly or through Bishops Ordinary.[45] This didn't help much, because a few months later Rev. Matulewicz received an official letter from the Congregation sent by mail to his St. Petersburg address with the seal of the Congregation on the outside of the envelope.[46]

On Monday morning, August 2, Rev. Matulewicz called on Undersecretary Caroli, who wrote directly on the petition filed two days earlier the first decision of the Congregation initiating the process of Renewal and reform of the Order. It says briefly that the Warsaw Bishop Ordinary who had issued the letter of recommendation is authorized to include the two applicants to the Order subject to approval of the Superior General. After three months, those applicants would need to reapply with letters of recommendation from the Bishops Ordinary of Mohylev, Warsaw, and Sejny. On top of the decree is its number and at the bottom the seal of the Congregation. That the decree was written by Prelate Caroli was verified by Blessed Jerzy in his letter of August 6, 1909.[47] The matter which had seemed so difficult had been resolved very quickly. Decisions were made by the Cardinal Prefect in person during his conversation with Rev. Matulewicz even before the latter had filed any formal petition. No traces have been found of any conference of Cardinal Vives y Tuto with other cardinals concerning the Renewal and reform of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.[48]

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[45] See Document 16.

[46] See Document 29.

[47] See Documents 19 and 18.

[48] Rev. Buczys stated erroneously in his memoirs, and others repeated after him, that the matter had been considered during a meeting of cardinals Jose Vivos y Tuto, Gaetano de Lai, Secretary of the Consistory, and Merry del Val, the Secretary of State, first separately and later with the participation of Rev. Matulewicz. (*Ricordi* di p.m.S. Ecc. Vescovo Fr. p. Buczys scritti dal prof. Zenone Ivinskis, *Summarium*..., p. 60 [in:] *Positio*).

Rev. Matulewicz, happy and satisfied with the unexpectedly successful result of his mission to Rome, set out immediately on his return journey. He arrived in Warsaw on Thursday, August 5, and stayed at Piekna Street and then in Chyliczki. During that time he was pondering the manner of implementation of the Congregation's decree, and he was trying to get in touch with Father General Sekowski and Rev. Buczys. The act of profession had to be prepared during the last week of the month, because Bishop Ruszkiewicz was expected to be back from his treatment on August 24, while by the beginning of September both professors needed to be back in St. Petersburg. Rev. Matulewicz had finally received a letter from Rev. Buczys and found out that Father Sekowski was undergoing treatment in the town of Druskienniki. He wrote to him immediately. Initially he believed that the three of them should meet in Mariampole and go to Warsaw from there. But as time was passing and Father Sekowski was absent from Mariampole, he changed his plan and ultimately decided that the meeting could only take place in Warsaw[49] where he summoned both men. They arrived on Friday, August 27.[50] As we can see, the deadlines had not been set up much earlier but were determined by the circumstances. Also, the applicants had no opportunity to prepare themselves for the important event of admission to the Order as we would like to imagine them doing.

The act of professing his first annual vows by Rev. Matulewicz and/or admitting Rev. Buczys to the novitiate of the Marian Fathers took place in the chapel of Bishop Ruszkiewicz in the former monastery of Missionary Priests which then was the residence of the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw on Sunday, August 29, 1909. There is documentary evidence that Bishop Ruszkiewicz, in accordance with the authorization received from the Congregation of the Religious, received the first monastic profession from Rev. Matulewicz and

[49] See Documents 19, 20, and 21.

[50] LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, p.72, cable of J. Matulewicz to Fr. Buczys, August 24, 1909; LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, p. ?, letter of W. Sekowski to J. Matulewicz, August 21, 1909.

enrolled Rev. Buczys in the novitiate. All this took place in the presence of the Superior General of the Order, Wincenty Sekowski.[51] Preserved documents leave no doubt on this subject. It was the Bishop and not the Superior General who performed the act of enrolling the two applicants to the Order. The situation was extraordinary. It was not the general rule that was being followed, but a particular decision of the Holy See. Bishop Ruszkiewicz was Rome's representative in resolving this matter. Rome's only restriction was that it should happen after securing the approval of the Order's Superior General.[52]

Approval of the constitutions and of the reformed Congregation

Now it was time to amend the constitutions, to obtain letters of recommendation from the Bishops Ordinary, and to strive for the growth of the Institute. Most of these efforts became the responsibility of Rev. Matulewicz who was also designated by the General as Novice Master.

Riding the train to St. Petersburg, Rev. Matulewicz and Rev. Buczys were planning their lives. They decided to renounce all employment outside of the Academy so as to be able to learn monastic law and to deepen their spiritual life. At the outset, they paid a visit to Bishop Stefan Denisewicz. They informed him of the effort that had been initiated and showed him the documents. The Bishop "praised everything and promised his help and support," Rev. Matulewicz related, but when they asked for release of Rev. Buczys from his duties in the Metropolitan Seminary, he refused to agree. Rev. Matulewicz also had too many duties: he taught dogmatic theology and temporarily also sociology in the Academy and taught sociology in the Seminary.

[51] See Document 22.

[52] A participant in the act, Rev. Franciszek Buczys stated erroneously in his memoirs written 40 years later and others have repeated after him that it was Father Wincenty Sekowski in the presence of Bishop Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz who accepted the vows from Rev. J. Matulewicz and admitted Rev. Buczys to the novitiate. (*Ricordi*..., [in:] *Summarium*..., p. 60 [in:] *Positio.*

Moreover, both priests worked in the Academy as substitute counselors. Matulewicz was an inspector and Buczys was a spiritual tutor. They were both committed and obligated to accompany the students for prayer and meditations and to participate in services.[53] Because of these occupations, Rev. Matulewicz writes of himself: "Up until the Christmas break, I have been fulfilling the duties of more than two people."[54]

It was only on October 16, 1909, that he asked Father Sekowski to send him the Rule and constitutions.[55] He worked on them in November and December. He and Rev. Buczys were considering each phrase of the new proposals.[56] During the Christmas break, Rev. Buczys brought the completed project of the constitutions to Fr. General Sekowski.[57] After listening to his reservations and settling on the final version of the text, the constitutions were forwarded to the Printing Office. On February 7, 1910, Rev. Matulewicz informed Prelate Rodolfo Caroli: "At this moment, they have been handed over to the printer."[58] The constitutions were published underground, without the mandatory stamp of the State Censor, in the printing office of C. Birkenfeld under the title Institutum Fratrum Marianorum sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae. Thus the main and most difficult task was performed.

Another important thing to do was to obtain the letters of recommendation from the Bishops Ordinary. Because of the danger that the police might find out, it could not be done by mail.

Father Sekowski took it upon himself to contact the Bishop of Sejny. Taking advantage of the presence in Mariampole of Rev. Jurgis Narjauskas, the Secretary of the Consistory in Sejny, he used him as

[53] See Document 23.
[54] See Document 27.
[55] See Document 23.
[56] *Ricordi*..., [in:] *Summarium*..., p. 60 [in:] *Positio*.
[57] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 59, pp. 13-14, letter of Fr. Buczys to J. Matulewicz, January 1, 1910.
[58] See Document 27.

an intermediary to inform the chief official of the diocese, Rev. Jozef Antonowicz, about the activities that had been undertaken and asked for a letter of recommendation from him.[59] The document obtained in this matter[60] failed to meet the expectations of the Order and was not forwarded to Rome.

During the Christmas break, Rev. Buczys went to Sejny.[61] He presented the documents and again asked for the letter. Prelate Antonowicz responded to the matter with understanding and sent his letter of January 10, 1910, directly to the Congregation of the Religious.[62]

At the same time, Rev. Matulewicz asked the Vicar General of the Warsaw Archdiocese for a letter. Bishop Kazimierz Ruskiewicz handed it to him on January 15, 1910.

Still missing was the letter from the Chapter Vicar of the Mohylev archdiocese who promised to submit one only after the constitutions were printed.[64] In this manner he wanted to minimize the danger of his letter being seized by the police. He wrote it only on April 16, 1910. [65]

All three letters have three elements in common: an assertion that religious orders are necessary in the region, and therefore the Ordinaries express their joy at the Renewal of the Marian Order and they recommend to the Congregation of the Religious all priests working on its Renewal as faithful to Catholic teachings, pious and zealous.

While preparing the document for Rome, the Marians at the same time were making efforts to increase their number. In the Academy itself they had a candidate, Konstantinas Songajlo, a student in the St. Petersburg University whose official post was as house servant to Rev. Buczys.[66]

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[59] See Document 25.

[60] See Document 24.

[61] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 59, pp.13-14, letter of Fr. Buczys to J. Matulewicz, January 1, 1910.

[62] See Document 26.

[63] See Document 28, Appendix 1.

[64] See Document 27.

[65] See Document 28, Appendix 4.

[66] See Document 23.

On January 9, 1910, Father General Sekowski accepted as members of the Congregation, with the consent of the Bishop Ordinary, three priests of the Sejny diocese: Pius Andziulis, who taught religion in the Teachers Seminary in Wejwery, Antanas Civinskas, a doctor of theology, and Jonas Totoraitis, a doctor of philosophy and historian.[67] Prelate Antonowicz, who managed the affairs of the Sejny diocese, even took care to provide appropriate housing for the future monks. In a letter to Fr. Sekowski, while expressing his satisfaction and joy at the Renewal of the Order, the prelate advised him to add another floor to the building so that the Marians didn't have to live in damp and stinking cells.[68]

In a memorandum to the Holy See about the Order dated April 10, 1910, Rev. Matulewicz mentioned six additional aspirants.[69] Almost all of them were college schoolmates or students of the two professors. Rev. Matulewicz complained to Undersecretary Rodolfo Caroli that because of the need for secrecy they could only provide information about their Congregation discreetly and very selectively.[70]

On January 26, 1910, Prelate Giuseppe Antonucci informed Rev. Matulewicz on behalf of the Congregation of the Religious that the letter from the Sejny Bishop Ordinary arrived and he reminded him about the other missing documents.[71] Half a year had already gone by since the initial decree which stated that the Congregation should be approached again "after at least three months."

Rev. Matulewicz responded to the Congregation of the Religious in a letter on February 7, 1910, addressed to both Prelate Antonucci and

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[67] LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 142, p. 5, Protocol of Enrollment, January 1, 1910.

[68] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, letter of W. Sekowski to J. Matulewicz, February17, 1910.

[69] See Document 28, Appendix 3.

[70] See Document 27.

[71] ACIVCSVA, Protocollum 1909, part 1, vol. 6900, No. 3455/09, a note in the diary, and Document 27. The letter is not extant. G. Antonucci from the Congregation for Studies was assigned the task of sending the letter because his office was the one that stayed in touch with the Academy in which Rev. Matulewicz and Rev. Buczys were teaching.

to Undersecretary Rodolfo Caroli. He explained that he had not been able to prepare the documents on time because he was overburdened with other tasks as well as by the external conditions which made it difficult to contact the diocesan authorities. At this opportunity, he also asked whether other letters of recommendation should be sent immediately, or whether to wait until publication of the constitutions, to send just the draft of the constitutions, or to reprint the old Rule and send it to Rome too?[72]

Without waiting for the delayed response from the Congregation, he appended the following documents to his letter of April 17, 1910, to Prelate Caroli: (1) letter of recommendation by the Vicar General of the Warsaw diocese, Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz ; (2) his own request as plenipotentiary of the General to the Pope for approval of the Order and approval of its constitutions for 10 years; (3) information about the Order; (4) a letter of recommendation from the Vicar General of the Mohylev archdiocese, Stefan Denisewicz; and (5) a draft of the constitutions entitled *Institutum Fratrum Marianorum*… .[73] The mail arrived in Rome in May.

Even before he received these documents, Undersecretary Rodolfo Caroli responded to Rev. Matulewicz's letter of February 7, 1910, which reached the recipient on April 22, 1910. He reminded him about the letters of recommendation from the Mohylev and Warsaw Bishops Ordinary; moreover, he asked for a letter from the General and for both the old and new constitutions.[74]

Rev. Matulewicz could provide the missing documents to Rome only several months later. Under his cover letter of September 1, 1910, he sent (1) the request of General Wincenty Sekowski to the Pope for approval of the new constitutions for 10 years and for approval of the renewed Order; (2) the Rule; and (3) the constitutions of 1787.[75]

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[72] See Document 27.
[73] See Document 28 with appendices.
[74] See Document 29.
[75] See Document 30 with appendices.

The Congregation for the Religious began consideration of the matter of the Marian Order even before it received the required documents. As it can be deduced from an internal memorandum of the Congregation, on August 10, 1910, Rev. Wladyslaw Marszalkiewicz, a Resurrectionist and a consultant to the committee to approve new monastic institutes, presented his comments on the received draft of the constitutions.[76]

In a letter to Prelate Caroli concerning the draft of the constitutions, Rev. Matulewicz wrote: "I have also reviewed the old charters of the Marian Order, amending them in accordance with the Standards and the most recent guidelines of the Church."[77] Working on the text, he was perusing three basic types of sources: the Marian constitutions of 1787, the Standards of the Congregation of the Religious of 1901, and "the most recent guidelines of the Church," the latter presumably referring to the recent Orders and above all the oral suggestions expressed by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Religious, Cardinal Jose Vives y Tuto discussed above. Thus, while Rev. Matulewicz preserved the Marian heritage in the draft, he also adapted it to political conditions and apostolic needs under Russian rule within the Universal Church of his own time.[78]

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[76] ACIVCSVA, Protocollum 1909, part 1, vol. 6900, no. 3544/09, "Risoluzione 10 VIII 1910 V. Marszalkiewicz." His review of the constitutions could not be found. In the copy of the constitutions preserved in the Archives of the Congregation for the Religious, all amendments are written in the handwriting of Undersecretary Rodolfo Caroli.

[77] See Document 27.

[78] On this subject: Feliks Bartecki, *Rozwój prawa partykularnego Zakony OO. Marianow w latach 1670-1910* [Development of special laws pertaining to the Marian Fathers Congregation, 1670-1910], Warsaw 1967 (typescript; BA thesis in the Academy of Catholic Theology (ATK); Julian Kalowski, *Koniecznosc zmiany struktury prawnej Zakonu Marianow* [The Need to Change the Legal Structure of the Marian Congregations], *"Prawo Kanoanoniczne"* 21 (1978) Nos. 1-2, pp.113-121; Marek Mikus, *Ewolucja Konstytucji Zgromadzenia Ksiezy marianow w latach 1910-1930* (*studium prawno historyczne*) [Evolution of the Marian Constitutions, 1910-1930 (an essay in the history of law)], Lublin 1990 (typescript, a BA thesis in the Catholic University in Lublin (KUL)); Witold Nieciecki, *Glowne cechy duchowowsci Zgromadzenia Ksiezy Marianow w swietle konstytucji marianskich z 1930 r*. [The Main Characteristics of

The Congregation made three essential amendments to the draft. First, the Marian writer of the law entitled his draft: "Institute of the Marian Brothers Under the Title of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary." In accordance with that title, all members of the Congregation, both priests and non-priests, were supposed to belong to the same category and enjoy the same rights.[79] Among the officers, only the General[80] and his Deputy[81] had to be priests, and it was also appropriate that the Novice Master be a priest.[82] That was the expression of the democratic views of Rev. Matulewicz. According to this innovation, all priests began to sign their name preceded by "Brother." Even General Sekowski switched to this style.

However, the Congregation for the Religious, in accordance with the Marian tradition (as a clerical order) and the existing law, deleted those sections, introducing two categories of monks: priests and brothers, whereby only the clergy had both active and passive voting rights in the community.[83]

Secondly, the Congregation included in the constitutions a clause from the old Marian Rule concerning special support for souls in Purgatory,[84] as one of the purposes of the Marian Order. However, the

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Marian Spirituality as Reflected in the Marian Constitutions of 1930], Rome 1965. For the complete picture, two worthless and even misleading publications, largely based on insinuation and groundless allegations should be noted: M. Kolodziejski, *Zakon OO. Marianow a Zgromadzenie Ks. Ks. Marianow (Kontrowersyjne problemy tzw. odnowy)* [The Marian Fathers Order and the Congregation of Marian Priests (Controversial Problems of So-called Renewal], Rome-Torun 1980; J. Muniak, *Mons. Jerzy Matulewicz i jego dzieje w swietle faktow* [Rev. J. Matulewicz and His History in the Light of Facts], Rome-Krakow 1980.

[79] *Institutum Fratrum Marianorum sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae*, St. Petersburg, 1910, section 6.

[80] Ibid., section 253.

[81] Ibid., section 261.

[82] Ibid., section 339.

[83] ACIVCSVA, p. 26, Vol. 1, *Constitutiones Instituti Fratrum Marianorum...,* section 6. It was only Vatican II which went in the direction proposed by Rev. Matulewicz (*Perfectae caritatis No. 15*).

[84] ACIVCSVA, p. 26, Vol. 1, *Constitutiones Instituti Fratrum Marianorum...*, section 5.

obligation to recite the breviary for the dead was not restored. Owing to this addition, one of the special features of Marian spirituality and mission was preserved.

Finally, the third amendment concerned restoration of the original character of the Marian apostolic mission: spreading the truths of the faith "especially among the simple people."[85] Rev. Matulewicz skipped this phrase in his draft under the assumption that currently the well-to-do and the educated may be more neglected religiously than the simple people.[86]

The draft of the constitutions thus amended was presented by the Prefect of the Congregation of the Religious, Cardinal Vives y Tuto, to the Pope during an audience on September 15, 1910. Pius X accepted the new constitutions and the reformed Order without any restrictions on their duration. The decree promulgating this papal decision was issued by the Congregation for the Religious on November 28, 1910. It presented a brief history of the Order, the manner and story of its Renewal and the postulated changes, especially the substitution of simple vows for solemn ones, and finally the description of the audience mentioned above.[87]

The accepted constitutions, together with the decree, were sent to St. Petersburg by a friend of Rev. Matulewicz, the Russian Rev. Sergey Grum-Grzymalo[88] through the intermediary of the Princess Magdalena Radziwill.

The common efforts of Father General Wincenty Sekowski, Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz, and Rev. Franciszek Buczys came to fruition. On the part of the Holy See, the decisive role in bringing the matter so quickly to its fortunate end was played by the Prefect of the Congregation of the Religious, Cardinal Vives y Tuto. The statute created legal conditions for quick growth of the Marian Order.

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[85] Ibid., section 3.

[86] Matulewicz, Jerzy: *Listy polskie* [Letters in Polish], Warsaw 1987, Vol. 1, p. 61, letter to K. Bronikowski, November 11, 1923.

[87] See Document 31.

[88] Matulis, Stefan; Gorski, Tadeusz: *Odnowienie marianow* [Renewal of the Marians], [in:] *Marianie,* p. 113.

The growth of the Congregation under the leadership of Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz

Remembering the encouragement of Cardinal Vives y Tuto to develop communal life "because there is no monastery without it," Rev. Matulewicz rented a house for the summer vacation of 1910 on the property of the Plater family in the village of Pohulanka near Dzwinsk and he invited all Marians there.[89] Father Sekowski, who could not come, wrote to the gathering with envy: "How lucky you are now to be gathering in this seclusion. You have a veritable spiritual feast. You can both pray ardently and at the same time rest after the toils of the entire year."[90] During this gathering, Rev. Totoraitis was accepted as a novice. It was on September 8, 1910, probably in Mariampole, that Rev. Franciszek Buczys made his initial monastic vows, probably to Father Sekowski.[91]

On April 10, 1911 on Monday of Holy Week, Father Wincenty Sekowski died in Mariampole at the age of 70. What had loomed as a threat that had spurred everyone to hurry, especially during the past two years, finally had happened. Two young Marians, Rev. Buczys and Rev. Pius Andziulis, took part in the funeral.[92] Thus, there were no "two coffins" as Father Sekowski had so feared. As it turned out, the haste on the part of all concerned, including the Roman Curia, was quite justified. The legal work on Marian Renewal was finished just a few months before the death of Father General Sekowski, or at the very last moment.

Before his death, Father Sekowski bequeathed to Rev. Matulewicz his savings in the amount of 6000 rubles. The Russian authorities did not respect his will as being performed by a monk in solemn vows, and they confiscated the money.[93]

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[89] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 37, pp. 33-34, letter of J. Matulewicz to J. Totoraitis, June 3, 1910.

[90] LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, pp. ? letter of W. Sekowski to J. Matulewicz, February 23, 1910.

[91] LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 142, p. 6, protocol of vows, October 6, 1910.

[92] Kucas, p. 84.

[93] Ibid.

On the day of its General's death, the Marian community numbered only two professed monks. Only when Rev. Totoraitis professed his initial monastic vows on July 13, 1911, could the Electoral Chapter meet.[94]

It took place the next day, July 14, in the sacristy of the parish church in Gielgudyszki in the Sejny diocese where the parish priest was a paternal uncle of Rev. Buczys. In the protocol drafted on that occasion, we read: "We, the remaining professed brother priests: Jerzy Matulewicz, Jan Totoraitis, and Franciszek Buczys have elected Brother Jerzy Matulewicz to be the Most Honorable Brother Superior of the Congregation."[95] Rev. Matulewicz, re-elected in 1923, performed this function until his death.

As the Congregation grew, so did the circle of people who were let in on the secret of its Renewal. The Secretary of the Sejny Consistory, Rev. Jurgis Narjauskas, who was informed of everything by Father Sekowski because of the office he held, did not keep the secret and told other priests about it. According to his story, as of the end of June 1911 everybody knew about the event "not excluding the Jews or Russians."[96]

At the same time, beginning in the spring of 1911, the czarist police, especially in St. Petersburg, were increasing their hunt for secret religious organizations. In his *Spiritual Diary*, Rev. Matulewicz wrote: "A new storm had befallen the Church. Everything had to be removed and hidden. It was dangerous to keep even the smallest note so as not to endanger others unnecessarily and not to betray oneself."[97] Under such circumstances, one could not consider organizing a larger novitiate, especially for priests. In fact there was serious danger that the Order itself might be destroyed.

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[94] LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 142, protocol of vows, July 13, 1911.

[95] See Document 32.

[96] LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, pp. 101-102, letter of J. Matulewicz to Fr. Buczys, June 25, 1911.

[97] *Diary*, p. 107, July 17, 1911.

It was thus decided that Rev. Matulewicz should leave the Russian Empire and move to the renowned center of studies in Fribourg, Switzerland. Many priests and seminarians used to go there to study. Therefore, under the pretense of pursuing university studies, it was possible to seek refuge in order to organize and educate the spirit and mind and then go back to work to the areas under Russian rule.[98] Undoubtedly this decision required a change in the direction of his entire life for Rev. Matulewicz. He had to abandon any further academic and clerical career.

At the end of the 1910-11 school year, he informed the Dean of the Academy, Rev. Aleksander Kakowski, that he needed to find another professor of dogmatic theology and inspector. When the saddened Dean asked why, Matulewicz answered that he was a monk and must leave.[99]

At the end of June 1911 he visited in turn Vilnius, Warsaw, Lodz, and Kovno. It was a drive for vocations. He was looking for candidates to the Order and was talking with bishops. By the end of July he went to Fribourg. There was a rumor, in fact beneficial for the Marians, that he might assume the chair of dogmatic theology there.[100] He introduced himself to the local bishop and received permission, first oral and then written, to open a novitiate.[101] He rented a boarding school for priests called "Canisianum" near the university. There he opened the novitiate and called it the House of Studies. Ten novices applied,[102] Poles and Lithuanians, mostly colleagues and disciples of Rev. Matulewicz.

Events of the previous weeks, especially his election as General and the transfer of the novitiate to Fribourg, created a new legal status. Accordingly, Rev. Matulewicz wanted to inform the Holy See

[98] Ibid., p. 132, Nov.17, 1911.

[99] LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, pp. 118-119, letter of J. Matulewicz to Fr. Buczys, [June 5-10, 1911].

[100] Polak-Katolik" [Pole-Catholic], 1911, No. 199, p. 3.

[101] See Document 34, Appendix.

[102] Diary, p. 133, November 17, 1911.

about these events and ask for the appropriate approvals. He also needed to settle with the Congregation of Studies some matters he had been asked to handle for the St. Petersburg Academy.

He stayed in Rome from the 15th to the 28th of November, 1911. With these matters at hand he approached Undersecretary Rodolfo Caroli at the Congregation of the Religious, whom he knew well. He gave a detailed report of the Order's activities during the preceding two years. On Caroli's advice, he filed the appropriate petitions. The Prelate congratulated him on the good start of the Institute and encouraged him to proceed along the chosen path.[103] The matters of the Marians were considered during a meeting of the Congregation on November 22. The following requests of Rev. Matulewicz were granted: (1) he was confirmed as General;[104] (2) permission was granted to transfer the novitiate from St. Petersburg to Fribourg;[105] (3) it was agreed that he might also assume the obligations of the Novice Master;[106] (4) considering the conditions prevailing under czarist rule, it was agreed that oral permissions only had to be granted to candidates to the Order by Bishops Ordinary;[107] and other more detailed permissions were granted.

On November 25, Rev. Matulewicz visited the Prefect of the Congregation for the Religious, Cardinal Vives y Tuto. He described to him the position of the Order. The Cardinal remembered well the visit two years earlier. He showed him sympathy and compassion. Rev. Matulewicz left him "fortified in spirit," with a deep conviction: "What a good father of all monks His Eminence Vives y Tuto is."[108]

Taking the opportunity of staying in the Eternal City, Rev. Matulewicz met with the eminent expert on monastic life, Father Wlodzimierz Ledochowski, who "expressed his highest approval and

[103] Ibid., pp. 132-134, 136.
[104] See Documents 33 and 37.
[105] See Documents 34 and 40.
[106] See Documents 35 and 38.
[107] See Documents 36 and 39.
[108] *Diary*, p. 144, November 25, 1911.

showed great compassion." Rev. Matulewicz asked his advice on numerous matters concerning the reconstructed Marian community.[109]

Conversations with Prelate Adam Sapieha, who was already preparing himself to take the Krakow See, had a quite different character. After a few meetings, the Prelate proposed to him that he take his place in the Roman Curia as a source for information about matters of the Church under Russian rule and even under that of Austria and Prussia. He also proposed to move the Marian novitiate to Rome. Rev. Matulewicz rejected the propositions of Prelate Sapieha.[110] That was another test and trial of what the Marian Congregation meant to him.

In some ways, the activity of Jozef Pietrzak (1882-1954) and his followers is related to the Renewal of the Congregation of Marian Fathers. Pietrzak maintained that he had been enrolled in the Marian Order in 1913, together with his two comrades, by Father Bernard Pielasinski (May 28, 1832-April 14, 1914), a Marian who after the abolition had left the Mariampole monastery and took residence as the chaplain in the asylum for the elderly in Gora Kalwaria near Warsaw.

The Marians from Mariampole believed that Father Pielasinski and other fathers who lived outside of the monastic community did not enjoy full monastic rights. This belief was emphasized many times by Father General Sekowski who stated that he was the only Marian.[111] The General knew exactly who belonged to his community. Similar statements were made by the Administrator of the Sejny diocese, Rev. Josef Antonowicz, in whose care the Marians within his diocese

[109] Ibid., pp. 140-142, 150.

[110] Ibid., pp. 146-151.

[111] On August 31, 1907, Rev. Maciej Gillis, Rev. Andrzej Jurewicz, and Rev. Wincenty Sekowski wrote to the Administrator of the Sejny diocese, Jozef Antonowicz: "[...] the three of us who remain out of the entire Congregation of the Marian Priests [...]" (Totoraitis, p. 52); W. Sekowski to J. Matulewicz: "Is there even a spark of hope left or should I let go and prepare two coffins, one for myself and one for the Order?" (see Document 9); W. Sekowski to Pius X, July 20, 1909: "This way, from all of us Marian priests that have ever existed, only I remain. All the others have already died." (See Document 13).

remained.[112] The whole process of Marian Renewal was sponsored from beginning to end by Bishop Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz, Suffragan and Vicar General of the Warsaw Archdiocese as steward of the Orders. He knew Father Pielasinski personally and did not deem it necessary to let him in on the secret of the Renewal. Rev. Julian Kalowski, after research, arrived at the following conclusion: "Everything seems to indicate that Father Bernard Pielasinski was secularized."[113] No wonder that Rev. Matulewicz and then the Congregation of the Religious repeatedly referred to Father Sekowski as the last Marian.

Rev. Matulewicz paid a visit to Pietrzak in Krakow on his way from Fribourg to Lithuania in the end of May, 1914. He learned that Pietrzak was conducting a campaign to revive the Marian Order and, in doing so, he was exposing the Congregation. Matulewicz informed him of the accomplished Renewal. As related by Bronislaw Zaluski, a member who participated in the meeting, he also declared that he had never heard about Father Pielasinski from Father Sekowski.[114]

He then wrote a memorandum to Adam Sapieha, the Bishop of Krakow. He explained in it that the Congregation of Marian Fathers had not ceased to exist. It had its approved constitutions and a Superior and so it didn't need to be revived. As to the movement initiated by Pietrzak, he declared that he would by no means desire to be an impediment in the noble strivings of good people if they are directed by the Divine Spirit and if their movement were legitimized by the Church authorities. Concerned for his own Congregation, he pleaded with the Bishop to take an interest in those people, to look into their goals to find out why they didn't want to join the legally existing Institute and, if he deemed it appropriate, to give legal form to their

[112] J. Antonowicz wrote to the Congregation of the Religious: "[...] Rev. Wincenty Sekowski, candidate in Theology, once the Superior General of the Order and now the only Marian still alive." (See Document 26).

[113] Kalowski, Julian: *Ocena zarzutow przeciwko legalnosci odnowy Zakonu Marianow* [Evaluation of the charges that the Renewal of the Marian Institute was illegal], "Prawo Kanoniczne" [*Canon Law*] 21 (1978), Nos. 3-4, p. 85.

[114] AGM, Litterae, Bronislaw Zaluski to Kazimierz Reklaitis, January 18, 1928.

movement and designate its spiritual leader who would look over their activity, in particular so that they brought no harm to the Congregation of Marian Fathers.[115]

It can be clearly seen that the Bishop of Krakow did not deem it appropriate to give canonical form to this movement. It was only after the death of Archbishop Matulewicz that Pietrzak approached Henryk Przezdziecki, the Bishop of Podlasie, with the request for permission to lead communal life in accordance with unreformed Marian constitutions in the former Marian monastery in Gozlin. On December 10, 1927, the Bishop of Podlasie approached Rome with this matter.[116] The Congregation of the Religious replied on April 25, 1928, explaining that "the transformed Marian Order is a legitimate continuation, although in a new form, of the former, legally identical Marian Order established in the seventeenth century." As a result, the Congregation declared that the acceptance of Pietrzak and his comrades in 1913 to the former Marian Order was null and void because at that time the said Order did not exist as such, and it also declared that in the future they might not lead communal life in accordance with the old Marian constitutions which no longer had any legal power, and that they must not call themselves Marians.[117]

Reacting to this response from the Congregation, on November 2, 1928, Bishop Przezdziecki established an organization modeled on Church brotherhoods, without any vows, without novitiate, under the following name: "Diocesan Association of Worshippers of the Immaculately Conceived Virgin, the Queen of Peace, the Helper of Souls in Purgatory, under the sponsorship of the said Mother of God and Saint Stanislaw B. and M. calling themselves Stanislavites, at the filial Church of St. John the Baptist in Janow in this Diocese."[118] His

[115] See Document 41.

[116] See Document 42.

[117] See Document 43.

[118] *Decree*, November 2, 1928, "Widaomosci Diecezjalne Podlaskie" [Gazetteer of the Podlasie Diocese], 1928, No.12, pp. 348-349

successor, Bishop Ignacy Swirski, dissolved the Society by decree on September 1, 1955.[119]

With its legal status well regulated and with wise leadership, the Congregation of Marian Fathers developed quickly even though it remained in hiding. In 1913 the first non-secret house was established in Chicago. After the Russians left Warsaw, Rev. Matulewicz organized a house for monks in 1915 in Bielany [now within Warsaw]. In 1918 he reopened the former monastery in Mariampole. In 1923 he set up a facility for Belorussians in Druja on the Dvina River, the first of its type during recent centuries. In the following year a monastic house for Latvians was opened in Welony as the first center of male monastic life since the abolition. In 1925 the General House was opened in Rome. When Archbishop Matulewicz died in 1927, the entire community was international in its character and numbered 234 monks.

The crowning work of Archbishop Matulewicz on the Renewal of the Congregation was the project of constitutions written in 1923-1924 based on rich experience, extensive studies, and the new Code of Canon Law. Prior to their confirmation, the Congregation of the Religious issued a decree declaring that the Congregation of Marian Fathers still enjoyed the privilege of exemption despite its transformation in 1910.[120] The constitutions were confirmed by Pius XI on the third anniversary of their author's death, on January 27, 1930.[121]

This is how they were evaluated by the great expert on monastic laws, Rev. Aleksy Petrani, professor of canon law in the Catholic University of Lublin: "These were among the best constitutions that I have laid my hands on. They are wholly original, written in elegant Latin, at the same time clear and transparent in their contents. Out of respect for the lawgiver, certain ascetic or outright mystical fragments

[118] *Decree*, November 2, 1928, "Widaomosci Diecezjalne Podlaskie" [Gazetteer of the Podlasie Diocese], 1928, No.12, pp. 348-349

[119] Polish Provincial Archive of the Marians, I L 2, copy of the decree promulgated by Bishop J. Swirski, September 1, 1955.

[120] See Document 24.

[121] See Document 45.

were left intact. Similar opinion concerning Bishop Matulewicz's constitutions were held by Father Jan Roth and Father Cyryl van Terneuzen."[122] They were the law of the Congregation until March 25, 1986.

Archbishop Matulewicz regarded his work for the Congregation as his special mission in the Church. After experiences of holding various prominent offices, he confided to Rev. Buczys in a letter on November 3, 1925: "I have always been and still am convinced that my most important vocation is to serve the Marian Congregation, to devote all my strength to it and to organize it as appropriate. I believed and still believe this to be the voice of God and I am almost certain of it."[123]

[122] Petrani, Aleksy: [An intervention in the discussion concerning the 19th and 20th century in the history of the Marian Fathers Congregation],"Summarium. Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL, No. 2 (22/1) for 1973," Lublin 1975, p. 175.

[123] Matulewicz, Jerzy: *Pisma wybrane* [Selected Works]. Selected and edited by Rev. Jan Bukowicz and Tadeusz Gorski, Warsaw 1988, p. 152.

No. 1. Visitation Orders of Bishop of Sejny Konstanty Lubienski for the monastery of Marian Priests in Mariampole

Mariampole, February 9, 1865

Konstanty Ireneusz duke Pomian Lubienski,[1] by God's mercy and by the grace of the Holy See the Bishop of Sejny and Augustow, Delegate of the Holy See, […][a]

[1] Lubienski, Konstanty Ireneusz (1825-1869), from 1863 the Bishop of Sejny. The first of the Polish bishops who, in accordance with the czar's ukase of October 27/November, 1864, had jurisdiction over the monastic orders. Later, he received this authority, together with other bishops, from the Pope. He died on his way to exile to which he was sentenced for his refusal to send a delegate to the government's Roman Catholic College in St. Petersburg (PSB, XVIII, pp. 489-490).

[a] List of persons arriving with the Bishop has been omitted.

Whereas upon comprehensive research, consideration, and much thought in the face of God for the following reasons and causes, to wit:

1. From our duty assumed on the basis of the decisions of the Synod of Trent (Session 25, Chapter VIII: Concerning Monks) as a Delegate of the Holy See to the Congregation of Marian Fathers located within our bishopric, as well as from the difficulty of appeal to the said Holy See, issues an stringently urgent obligation to care for and safeguard everything that may assure the permanent existence and activity of said Congregation as well as the preservation and strengthening of monastic obedience;

2. Father Aleksander Roman Wilczynski[2] gave us his resignation from the office of Superior General and asked that we — accepting our stewardship over the entire Congregation — take care ourselves of everything that is necessary;

3. Currently the Mariampole monastery is the only numerary one whose permanent existence is assured after all the others have been closed by the czar's decree of October 27/November 8 of last year, and almost all the Fathers have been brought here. Therefore the preservation and well-being of the Congregation decisively depends upon this monastery;

4. Whereas the office of Superior General and of the General Chapter was abolished or prevented by the civil law from being duly exercised, even though it formerly was the only governing body of record and the most appropriate one for the Marian Congregation and has been the prime factor in its preservation; so that it did not remain without leadership, but had its own legislative and executive governance working without impediments and able to enforce its ordinances;

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[2] Wilczynski, Aleksander Roman (1802-1871), from 1859 the General of the Marian Order. He was brought by the czarist authorities from the monastery at Skorzec to Mariampole, and on February 9, 1865, at the order of Bishop Lubienski, he gave up his office of General Superior (EAM, p. 60).

5. Whereas, on the other hand, the civil law not only does not prevent this Congregation, as well as the other monastic families, from being governed by its superiors in accordance with its own constitutions, but even makes it expressly mandatory, on condition that it remained dependent upon the Bishop Ordinary of the locality and did not in any way fail to comply with the civil laws and regulations;

Therefore, [said Bishop of Sejny] has hereby ordered and decreed, until such time as the Holy See has its say, as follows:

Article 1. The Office and duties of the Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, together with the legislative, executive, and judicial power, including all the privileges, authority, primacy, and powers of representation, shall be transferred to the person of the Superior or leader of the Mariampole monastery, linked to and unified with his person.

Article 2. The whole power and jurisdiction previously held and exercised by the General Chapter of the Congregation is hereby transferred to the Council of the Mariampole monastery, together with all privileges, authority, and powers of representation.

Article 3. The Council of the Superior will include his Deputy or the Commissary General, the fathers who formerly performed the office of Superior General as counselors in permanence, the monastery's procurator, four council members, and its secretary.

Article 4. The Superior of the Mariampole monastery will be obliged to summon the Council and obtain acceptance or guidance in all such matters in which the acceptance or guidance of the Chapter council was formerly required by the Superior General who held his office by general provisions of canon law and by detailed clauses of the Congregation's constitutions. The Superior will be empowered to decide and handle all other matters himself according to his prudent judgment.

Article 5. For decisions and decrees of the Mariampole monastery Council, it is necessary and sufficient that the above mentioned fathers currently present in the Mariampole monastery be summoned as required by law.

+ Konstanty Ireneusz the Bishop of Sejny
Delegate of the Holy See
Jerzy Katyll, Delegated Visitator
Andrzej Marmo, Honorific Canon of Samogitia
Assessor of the Consistory General in Sejny
Jan Prusalajtys, Secretary of the General Visitation

AGM, IG, Documenta Historica Generalia No. 5, fasciculus 11, pp. 11-12, copy, in Latin, No. 71.

No. 2 Approval of Father Jerzy Czesnas as the Superior of the Mariampole monastery by the Bishop of Sejny, K. Lubienski

Mariampole, February 13, 1865

Konstanty Ireneusz duke Pomian Lubienski, by God's mercy and by the grace of the Holy See the Bishop of Sejny and Augustow, Delegate of the Holy See,

To the Most Reverend in Christ Jerzy Czesnas[1] of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, canonically elected as the Superior of the Mariampole monastery, beloved by Us in Christ, greetings in the name of the Lord.

For the sake of proper fulfillment of the duty we have assumed as the Delegate of the Holy See toward the Congregation of Marian Fathers and in order to assure, inasmuch as possible in the face of God both the spiritual and the temporal well-being of said Congregation as

[1] Czesnas, Jerzy (1835-1892), a native of the village of Vaitiskiai in the Mariampole parish. He joined the Marians in 1855. After graduating from the Theological Academy in Warsaw, he became the Prefect of the Mariampole High School in 1862. At the age of 30, by recommendation of Bishop K. Lubienski, he was elected Superior of the Mariampole monastery. He held this office until his death (EAM, p. 7).

well as for the Mariampole monastery, we regard your canonical selection, Most Reverend Father, as the Superior of the Mariampole monastery of the Congregation to be worthy of confirmation and therefore we hereby confirm it and we declare it confirmed to all concerned now or ever after in accordance with our Decree No. 71 of the 9th day of this month.[2] We confer on you, Reverend Father, all power and jurisdiction, including all the privileges, authority, primacy, and rights which according to the Rule and constitutions of the Congregation are due and usually conferred upon Superiors, both Generals of the whole Congregation and those of local monasteries. We order each and all Fathers and Brothers of said Congregation to acknowledge you as their Superior and strive to show you due respect under penalty of excommunication and other penalties mandated by the Congregation's regulations. We also wish you, Most Reverend Father, to consider yourself called to care for both the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Congregation and monastery entrusted to you both together with your Council and without it and with our Decree of the 9th day of this current month and with the regulations and customs thereof; you should take care to ensure all the monks subject to you receive whatever is necessary for their sustenance and clothing so that they are free from gathering and keeping money, because such violation of the vow of poverty is habitually excused by neglect on the part of Superiors. You will also make every effort to ensure that the Rule of the Congregation of Mary of the Immaculate Conception as well as its constitutions, both general and detailed, are most carefully obeyed.

Moreover, apply all your strength so that monastic obedience flourishes and bears fruit in the Congregation conferred to your care. In all this, do your best to be so active and vigilant that at the Last Judgment you will be able to report all your strivings to God and to ourselves whenever you will be summoned.

AGM, IG, Documenta Historica Generalia No. 5, fasciculus 11, p. 13, copy, in Latin, No. 71.

[2] See Document 1.

No. 3. Request by the Mariampole Marians to the Bishop of Sejny [Piotr Wierzbowski][1] to approve Father Wincenty Sekowski as their Superior

Mariampol, November 24, 1892

Most Reverend Bishop,

On the 15th of this month and year our Superior, Rev. Jerzy Czesnas died, thus leaving us without the most essential condition for communal life, meager as the Congregation is now.

Trusting in God and in the protection of the Most Holy Virgin Mary as well as depending upon help from Your Excellency, we are making our last effort, which is all we can do, to protect this one and only monastery of our Congregation, under the title of Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, from falling.

With this purpose, in accordance with our monastic laws, we have selected a Superior in the person of Rev. Wincenty Sekowski, a member of our Congregation, who only for the sake of the community has accepted our choice; and thus we are most humbly requesting Your Excellency to accept and present him to the government authorities so that he might legally and freely manage the monastery as well as the Mariampole parish.

Sending this request to you, our Luminary and Shepherd, believing it to be our holy duty to express our gratitude, and prostrating ourselves at your feet, we remain as your servants until death,

Rev. Wincenty Sekowski
Rev. Kazimierz Pestynnik[2]
Rev. Maciej Gillis[3]

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 86, p. 10, copy, in Polish, No. 286.

[1] Wierzbowski, Piotr Pawel (1818-1893), ordained as a priest in 1841 and thereafter was the Chaplain to Bishop Pawel Straszynski and held the office of a regent in the Sejny Consistory. In 1867 he was nominated a Visitator of Monasteries. In 1872-1893 he was the Bishop of Sejny (*Biskupi*, p. 221).

[2] Pestynnik, Kazimierz (1828-1893), at the Chapter meeting in 1862 he was elected Novice Master. In 1865 he was nominated General's Vicar (EAM, p. 42).

[3] Gillis, Maciej (1834-1908), in 1865 became the Procurator of the Mariampole monastery (EAM, p. 15).

No. 4. Request by Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz to General Wincenty Sekowski for admission to the Order together with his friends

St. Petersburg [8/9 September,] 1908
Draft, date inserted later: October 7, 1908[1]

Most Revered and Dearest Father,

As a guest in Mariampole I pleaded that you, Dear Father, not cease in your endeavors to obtain permission from the authorities to open the monastery. I was doing that for myself and a few of my friends.

For a long time I have felt the desire for a more perfect life, but I was loath to leave the Church in our country, where there is so much work and so few workers, and to set out somewhere into foreign lands, so I have stayed.

Now, when there is more freedom in our country, when Orders begin to be revived, I would like to realize my desires and in particular, I would like to join the Marian Congregation. I spoke about this with one of my friends;[2] he too would immediately join along with me. We are almost certain that two more of our friends also would like to don the Marian gown.[3]

[1] The date inserted later into the draft: October 7, 1908. Contents of the letter and reaction of the recipient indicate September 9, 1908.

[2] Buczys (Bucys), Franciszek Piotr (1872-1951), a colleague and friend of Rev. Matulewicz. After studies in Sejny, St. Petersburg, and Fribourg, from 1902 to 1915 he was a Professor of Apologetics in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg. On August 29, 1909, he was accepted into the Congregation of Marian Priests.

[3] Cywinski (Civinskas), Antanas (1867-1913), received a doctorate in theology in the Gregorianum in Rome and studied sociology and philosophy in Fribourg (1900-1902), where he was a colleague of Rev. Matulewicz. He was accepted into the Marians on January 9, 1910, but he failed to begin his novitiate because of ill health (EL, I, p. 550).

Totoraitis, Jonas (1872-1941), studied in Sejny and Fribourg where he received a doctorate in philosophy in 1904. On January 9, 1910, General Wincenty Sekowski admitted him to the Congregation of Marian Priests. He took vows on July 13, 1911. He taught history at the University of Kowno (1923-1937) and he was the first Provincial of Lithuania (1930-1933). He was the author of many works on the history of Lithuania (EL, V, p. 476).

I am convinced that later some of our disciples will follow us. That would at least be a beginning. In fact, all four of us are college graduates and we all have doctoral degrees. I am not saying that in the spirit of boasting. I am aware that the decision to admit or refuse to admit a candidate will depend on you, Dear Father, and I understand the importance of that. All I would like to present is roughly what kind of people would be joining at the beginning. It seems very important to me because those people will to a great extent determine the direction, spirit, and entire development of the Congregation.

Indeed, offering ourselves as servants of the Lord God in the Marian Congregation, we would like it to stand upright from the beginning. Therefore, […][a] candidates should be selected carefully so as not to admit inappropriate people. So, I implore you again, Dear Father, to endeavor as much as possible to obtain permission of the authorities to admit candidates into the Congregation.

The two of us on our part will help you as much as we can, Father. We shall find some connections here, and I hope we shall reach the Department and the Ministry. It is important to prepare everything well.

I have mentioned to you that it is best to approach in those matters Rev. Canon Chelmicki (Warsaw, 27 Podwale Street).[4] The Duchess Cecylia Plater-Zyberk (Warsaw, 24 Piekna Street)[5] will also be able to achieve much. If the Dear Father is planning to come to Warsaw soon,

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[a] Two words illegible.

[4] Chelmicki, Zygmunt (1851-1922), a priest in the Warsaw Archdiocese, social activist, editor, and publisher, in 1917-1918 Secretary of the Regency Council. Rev. Matulewicz collaborated with him in editing the "Church Reference Encyclopaedia." They were also pursuing charitable activities together (EK, III, p. 113).

[5] Plater-Zyberk, Cecylia (1853-1920), pioneer of the organized movement of Polish Catholic intelligentsia; among others a founder of educational/residential establishments in Warsaw at Piekna Street and in Chyliczki. Rev. Matulewicz lived and received treatment in her establishment in Warsaw in the years 1904-1907. He was connected to the Duchess by friendship, common interests, and projects (PSB, XXVI, p. 694).

I may write letters to Rev. Chelmicki and to Duchess Plater. She knows Margrave Wielopolski well.[6] Her relative is the Margrave's wife.

I know more people, but I am told that it is not a good thing to get too many people involved. The authorities might think that this is some extraordinarily […][b] important matter and they would create obstacles. Therefore, influence should be used with moderation.

My friend and I will take care of everything we possibly can in St. Petersburg. I intend to be in Warsaw during the Christmas season.

So, if the Dear Father agrees to admit us to your Congregation, we shall begin to care about it together, joining each other in prayer. I hope that, through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin, we shall pray and receive what we wish for from the Lord God.

I started to write this letter yesterday, which here was the holy day of the Virgin's birth. Let us hope that she will intercede with God for the Renewal of the Marian Order.

In the meantime before that happens, I beg you, Dear Father, to keep everything in deepest secrecy, especially my name so that its disclosure doesn't bring harm to the cause.

Moreover, I would like to receive one copy of the Marian Rule.

I beg you to answer as soon as you can if the Dear Father intends to make use of our intention and our proposal.

I recommend myself and my friends to the prayers of the Dear Father and I humbly kiss his hands.

Rev. Jerzy Matulaitis

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, draft, in Lithuanian.

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[6] Wielopolski, Zygmunt Margrave Gonzago Myszkowski (1863-1919), since 1905 President of the Party of Real Politics.

[b] Two words illegible.

No. 5. Letter from Father Wincenty Sekowski to J. Matulewicz expressing joy because of the candidates applying to the Order

Mariampole, October 14, 1908

Honorable Reverend Professor,

First of all, I apologize for responding in Polish. I am doing so because contemporary spelling in Lithuanian is too difficult to me and I do not have a good grasp of it. In the second place, I apologize for not responding for so long in this matter of paramount importance, but this was not my fault. During that time I was completely disabled. I was laid low by a fairly severe illness, depression, a sadness that took hold of me, various failures, and even some kind of a feeling of oppression. I did not know what to do with myself and how to proceed. I cherished the thought of giving up entirely, renouncing everything and giving myself up to the grace or disfavor of the Diocesan authorities. Today, thank God, I feel better and there is a little light in my soul. Although I am still ailing and I don't have my full faculties or even consciousness at times, hope has entered my heart and mind that something still may and will happen despite the most unpropitious circumstances.

I have drawn the most courage and some bravery and acceptance from the letter and the intentions expressed in it, the truly holy efforts of the Honorable Reverend Professor. Never in my life, and especially since I have joined the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin, have I experienced such joy as I did at the moment I read the letter of the Honorable Professor. Unfortunately I had no [opportunity] and I could not share this happiness and joy with anyone because (with the exception of the simple folks) there isn't a person here who would understand and feel the need for the Congregation.

Even if our intentions, wishes, and desires will not be fulfilled, even though everything stands against it, the fact alone that there are

right-minded people is itself a great happiness to me so that I can expect a grand future.

Please assert to your colleagues who share such a good and holy wish to join our Congregation my gratitude and joy at this enterprise.

I implore you very kindly to encourage and persuade them to sustain those virtuous intentions as much as possible.

As to admittance to our Congregation, please don't doubt it for a moment. Everyone is welcome, especially those who cherish the will to sustain and revive this unique Congregation with such sacrifice and avocation.

In case of my death, I transfer all privileges and rights to the Honorable Professor which especially today can be used for the purpose of securing approval and acknowledgement in the Holy See. In my desk there are documents issued from Rome acknowledging and confirming this Congregation. I will even leave a certain quantum[1] to which no one has or can have a claim, to get things started.

All requests that have been filed in the Ministry for renewing our monastery, namely the most recent one by intermediary of His Eminence the Diocesan Administrator, are in St. Petersburg[2] and the copy is with Mr. Bulat,[3] a deputy from the Mariampole district who recently came to see me and promised to send it to me as the basis for further petitions, but I haven't received it yet and in the meantime I cannot start anything. I believe I'll receive it soon.

For the time being, I am not sending the Monastic Rule and constitutions. I don't think it's timely. I'll send them soon.

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[1] A sum of money.

[2] Petition of several thousand faithful from Mariampole addressed in 1906 to Prime Minister Witte: letter of the Sejny Diocesan Administrator Jozef Antonowicz to the Governor Stremouchow of Suwalki, dated 8/21 March, 1906; a letter from the Marians to the Sejny Administrator of August 31, 1907; letter from the Sejny Administrator to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of September 7, 1907 (Totoraitis, pp. 51-53).

[3] Bulat (Bulota), Andrzej (1872-1941), attorney representing the district of Suwalki in the Duma from 1907 to 1912. He was a member of the Trudoviki party (EL, V, pp. 112-113).

I wish to express again my gratitude for your caring about this poorest of all Congregations in the world, my feelings of joy from such a surprise and, renewing my plea to hold fast to your conviction, I consider it to be my good fortune to sign myself as your humblest servant.

Reverend W. Sekowski

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, original, in Polish.

No. 6. Letter of Rev. J. Matulewicz to Father W. Sekowski concerning the efforts to renew the Mariampole monastery

St. Petersburg, October 31, 1908

Most Revered Father,

We have already begun efforts to move our case forward. Last week we saw Representative Bulat;[1] we were discussing how to proceed. We arrived at the conclusion that it would be best if he didn't get involved in the matter since he could damage it as a man who belongs to the leftist opposition in the Duma. The documents he had been holding were taken by Rev. Buczys for safekeeping to his home. Rev. Canon Chelmicki came to St. Petersburg from Warsaw on business.[2] I discussed the matter with him, invited him here for dinner tomorrow; we shall discuss the whole situation in detail. He told that me that a couple days ago he managed to obtain from Governor General Skalon[3] permission for the Salesians, who will soon move to Warsaw. Therefore I expect that his support for our cause will not be without decisive significance. He is friendly with Mr. Jaczewski[4] and he has

[1] See Document 5, note 3.

[2] See Document 4, note 4.

[3] Skalon, Georgiy Antonovitch (1847-1914), the Governor General of Warsaw and commander of the Warsaw military district in 1905-1914.

[4] Probably a reference to Jaczewski, Leonard (1858-1916), a well-known engineer and geologist who worked on behalf of the Polish community in St. Petersburg and was interested in the school system in Poland (PSB, X, pp. 287-288).

influence with the Governor General. In fact, not only can he do a lot by himself, but he can also achieve much through his connections. He has promised to help open up the Marian Fathers' monastery. I believe that the Reverend Father will need to be in Warsaw and meet with Rev. Canon Chelmicki in person. I will write about it in due course. So, if I may say so, we have the best influence and support assured in Warsaw. We shall start our efforts here in the Ministry's department. Next week I will go with one of my acquaintances to a department official[5] to obtain information concerning the Marian Fathers' monastery. We shall then invite him to have dinner with us because it is best to work on business in the course of casual conversation. After I obtain the information, I will let you know.

We haven't forgotten about Sejny either. Rev. Buczys has connections there; he wrote to Sejny to have them promote the cause. For the time being, his special request is that Rev. Prapuolenis[6] should write a word himself to the department in favor of the monastery. His voice means a lot here. When he is mentioned, the faces of officials brighten up. Therefore, if you can, Revered Father, please write your own letter asking for Rev. Prapuolenis's support for the cause.

So we are doing as much as we can, but our greatest trust is in the care of the Most Holy Mother, to whom we confer our cause constantly.

There is just one condition. Please, Reverend Father, until the time comes do not mention my or Rev. Buczys's intentions, because that might harm the cause. There are people who would not like us to leave our present positions. Please don't even tell Rev. Chelmicki about it. Just present the matter in general terms.

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, draft, in Polish.

[5] A reference to Nefedyev, an official of the Department of Religious Affairs.

[6] Prapuolenis (Propalanis), Kazimieras (1858-1953), a priest in the Sejny diocese; he worked for some time as Secretary of the Consistory in the Mohylev Archdiocese in St. Petersburg. During that time he became involved with Russian intellectuals and politicians. He was a co-founder of the weekly "Saltinis" and the monthly "Vadovas" (EL, V, pp. 338-339).

No. 7. Letter from Father W. Sekowski to Rev. J. Matulewicz concerning the difficulties of restoring the Mariampole monastery

Mariampole, November 6, 1908

Honorable Reverend Professor,

It is only to your third letter that I am responding. How indolent and clumsy I am. Please forgive me. I hope I shall do better.

Everything goes well. The cause has a taken a propitious turn since it fell into such noble and worthy hands which work strenuously without rest but all to no avail since I cannot do what I should. I had just risen from my previous illness and then I had to lie down again for a week and a half, bedridden by rheumatism in my legs. I was already prepared to set out to Warsaw and on the very same day one of my legs became immobilized, almost in an instant. And the timing was good, because what would I do with myself if it had happened on the road? Today, thank God, I feel a little better. I got out of bed. I can walk across the cell and maybe I'll be able to eat a bite. Tomorrow I intend to go to the Church, maybe even perform Holy Mass.

Misfortune! I have no other documents here. I sent them to Mr. St[anislaw] Gawronski when he went to the State Council because he asked for them, and he promised to promote our cause; namely, I sent the petitions of our people that had been submitted to Prime Minister Witte, and those have already been lost. I believe this is not of much importance. They have plenty of such petitions.

I still don't know if I will be able to go to Warsaw, especially in this season when rheumatism is such a big issue, but I hope that God will help me because this is not just my cause but of importance to many others.

I begin to wonder myself whether I will live to see the resurrection of the Congregation which today is dead to the world, or if I will not. No matter what, I shall make every sacrifice, and I shall do whatever is

within my power. As soon as I can, I shall go to Warsaw and I will see Rev. Canon Chelmicki[1] and others whom I regard as influential.

A government salary is out of the question. I wish that they would have left the parish with us and would give us back the monastery bequeathed to the parishioners after abolition, since without it, it will be impossible to commence and continue, even more so since the main mission of our Congregation [is to] teach the people while performing parish duties, pray for souls in purgatory, maintain parish schools, venerate the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, and strictly abide by the three monastic vows.

Please persevere in your holy intentions and in your sacrifice. The Most Holy Mother will not abandon us if this is the will of God.

Your most humble servant and brother in Jesus Christ,

Rev. W. Sekowski

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, original, in Polish.

[1] See Document 4, note 4.

No. 8. Letter from Father W. Sekowski to Rev. J. Matulewicz concerning the efforts in Warsaw to renew the Mariampole monastery

Mariampole, December 11, 1908

Honorable Reverend Professor,

I apologize for such a long silence. I was too depressed by my illness. Almost every day things grow worse with me. In spite of that, I went to Warsaw before Advent, but to no avail. I did little or nothing because I could not. I could just visit Canon Chelmicki[1] who told me when he was saying good-bye that he could not guarantee any results,

[1] See Document 4, note 4.

but that there is no harm in trying. A few days after my return home I sent the Rev. Canon some information needed to start this business. I believe that much if not everything depends on the ministers, and especially on the Prime Minister. There is little help in the Duma. It is busy with other things. But all this is within God's power; so what God wills, will happen.

I am thinking about my Last Will. I don't know which is better, whether to make a bequest by my own hand or officially by a notary public. I do not want the news to spread, for no notary would be likely to keep the secret.

Here there are no changes. Please accept the assurance of my deep reverence and respect.

Your servant, Rev. W. Sekowski

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, original, in Polish.

No. 9. Letter from Father W. Sekowski to Rev. J. Matulewicz asking whether there is hope of reviving the monastery

Mariampole, April 24, 1909

Honorable Reverend Professor,

Receiving no information whatsoever about our business, I am compelled to write you at least a few words to ask how are things going? Is there even a spark of hope left or should I let go and prepare two coffins, one for myself and one for the Order?

I hardly left my cell this winter. I spent ten weeks lying in bed and as a result I have lost my energy and, simply speaking, I am just a little desperate. The uncertainty of my situation alone makes my disposition poor, even though I do not yield to those mournful thoughts. I am most frightened by the thought that maybe I am the main cause of the fall of the Congregation and I dare to ask God in my unworthy prayers that

"if I do not deserve that the Congregation be revived during my lifetime, let someone else stand up to fight the almost insurmountable challenge."

Since March 4, I have been going to the Church. I help hear Holy Confessions and this sustains me. But I cannot drive to visit the sick and I am unable to do any other business requiring any effort.

I am awaiting the Reverend Professor's answer, if only just to learn what I should do with myself, because these dreams have tormented [me] enough. There is nothing new here except that famine is threatening our neighborhood. The good people have neither bread for themselves nor fodder for their cattle, and cold is destroying the seedlings. Not one flower has appeared, not one tree has blossoms. If this goes on any longer, there will be no rye, wheat, or clover. But, this is in God's hands.

I apologize for worrying the Reverend Professor and for interrupting your arduous toil. Please accept my cordial wishes for all the graces of heaven on your Name's Day.

Your servant, Reverend W. Sekowski, Marian

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, original, in Polish.

No. 10. Letter from Rev. J. Matulewicz to Rev. Fr. Buczys concerning reception of a letter of recommendation to the Warsaw Suffragan, Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz

[Warsaw,] July 16, 1909

Dear Frank,

I am writing to Gielgudyszki[1] and at the same time to Kovno to the address of Rev. Dambrauskas[2] because I don't know where to catch

[1] Gielgudieszki (Gelgaudiskis), a small town in Southeastern Lithuania where a paternal uncle of Fr. Buczys was the parish priest (EL, II, pp. 295-296).

[2] Dambrauskas, Aleksandras (1860-1938), professor of the Theological Academy. in St. Petersburg. From 1906 he lived in Kowno and devoted himself mainly to journalism. Among others, he founded the periodical "Draugiga" and was its editor for 20 years (EL, II, pp.16-18).

you so my letter will find you. I have already finished the matter with Bishop Ruszkiewicz. He gave me the necessary document, very favorable for us. He went abroad himself and left his address, telling me that he should be contacted without hesitation if need be. His document is a kind of a certification that the monastery should be preserved and that he knows me as a serious person et cetera.

You might try to obtain an opinion from Bishop Cyrtowt[3] that monasteries are needed here and especially that the Marians should be revived, at least in secrecy if it cannot be done otherwise.

I have not yet gotten a passport, but I have received word from St. Petersburg that they will send the necessary letter immediately and then it will be possible to get the passport here in Warsaw.[…][a]

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 99, pp. 30-31, original, in Lithuanian.

[3] Cyrtowt, Kaspar Felicjan (1841-1938), from 1897 the Suffragan of Samogitia. In 1908-1910 he administered the diocese and on April 7, 1910, he was nominated Bishop of Samogitia (*Biskupi*, p. 41).

[a] The issues of articles for Rev. Dambrauskas and renewal of female houses in Lithuania were omitted.

No. 11. Letter of recommendation by K. Ruszkiewicz, Suffragan of Warsaw, to the Congregation of the Religious on behalf of Rev. J. Matulewicz

Warsaw, July 16, 1909

Your Eminence,

Herewith I warmly recommend to Your Eminence Reverend Jerzy Matulewicz, Doctor of Theology, Professor of Dogmatic Theology and Sociology in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, whom I know well as a sincere priest committed to the Holy See, distinguished by deep faith, exemplary conduct, and fiery zeal.

I humbly implore that — taking into consideration the special difficulties and interdictions which are enforced here concerning monastic life and without regard for any impediments whatsoever — he might take his first annual vows in the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary which was approved by Pope Pius VI on November 17, 1786.

With due reverence and respect,

+ Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz, Bishop
Suffragan of Warsaw

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, p. 11, copy, in Latin.

No. 12. Letter from Rev. J. Matulewicz to Rev. Fr. Buczys concerning the decision to go to Rome

Warsaw, July 19, 1909

Dear Frank,

I have been eagerly awaiting your letter and I felt great joy when I received it. It turns out that letters from Gielgudyszki to Warsaw take as long as four days.[1] You were supposed to be in Kovno during the meeting of the St. Kazimierz Society, so I don't know where to write to you, to Gielgudyszki or to Kovno. I will write to both places. It is important that I stay in touch with you.

I think it will be necessary after all to go abroad in order to get information. I am determined to set out as soon as I get a passport. The Bishop's advice is good. It won't do any harm if I go to Rome and find out what they think about our intentions. As Bishop Ruszkiewicz said: "It is important to know how they will look upon such a lifestyle and such a project there." In my opinion, the prerogatives of the local Administrator will not be infringed by it. Obviously, it is impossible to

[1] See Document 10, note 1.

settle down in Mariampole without his knowledge and consent, but it seems to me that now it is very important to get in touch with the highest authorities and find out what they think of our plans. Then it will be possible to proceed more bravely here, knowing that our intentions are regarded favorably there. For this reason alone, it is worthwhile to go — it will reinforce our spirit, give us strength, and subsequently make it easier to overcome any obstacles here. With the recommendation and support of Bishop Ruszkiewicz in hand, and depending upon him, I will be able to gain access everywhere and find out what we will need. It seems to me that it is very important to hear their opinion. For this alone, it is worthwhile to go. We shall know the will of the Church.

Please write to Ledochowska[2] asking her to recommend me to her brother,[3] because through him, as Bishop Ruszkiewicz mentioned, it will be easier to get in touch with Bucceroni[4] who will give the best advice.

I will have to arrange for a passport in Warsaw. I am just awaiting permission from Denisewicz.[5] As it turns out, three weeks after leaving

[2] Ledochowska, Urszula (1865-1939), a sister of Wlodzimierz Ledochowski and founder of the Ursuline Sisters of the Heart of the Dying Jesus. When Rev. Matulewicz was living in St. Petersburg, she was running a boarding house for girls attached to the high school of St. Catherine and, in secret from the authorities, she was laying the foundation for the future Congregation. Rev. Buczys was the confessor in her boarding house. In 1983, John Paul II beatified her (PSB, XVI, pp. 618-619).

[3] Ledochowski, Wlodzimierz (1866-1942), during 1906-1915 an assistant of the German chapter of the Society of Jesus and from 1915 the General of that congregation. A very influential man with the Roman Curia (PSB, XVI, pp. 635-637).

[4] Bucceroni, Gennaro, S.J. (1841-1918), theologian and authority in canon law. A consultant to various Church offices, he was a member of the committee evaluating new monastic institutes. He was also the author of a large part of the Standards of the Congregation of the Religious of 1901 in accordance with which the Marian constitutions of 1910 were revised (EK, II, p. 1144).

[5] Denisewicz, Stefan (1836-1913), as Chapter Vicar he administered the Mohylev archdiocese during three periods: 1903-1904, 1905-1908, 1909-1910. On June 12, 1908, he became the Suffragan. In 1911 the czarist authorities deprived him of the possibility of performing pastoral duties (EK, III, p. 1171).

St. Petersburg, one loses the right to get a passport there, so I shall obtain it here in Warsaw. I am glad that you have succeeded in Wejwery[6] and in Mariampole, and that your sister is also doing well.[7] However, I am concerned with your dizzy spells. Try to rest, my Brother. If possible, don't pick up a book so that you improve your health. You know yourself what a task is awaiting us.

So, having considered everything tonight after I got your letter yesterday in the late evening, I decided to go abroad. I will not infringe on anybody's rights by doing so, and I will learn the will and views of the highest authority. We shall have something on which to lean.

I am kissing you. Write back quickly. I have already written you about the letter that I received from Reverend Dambrauskas.[8]

I am kissing you.

Yours, Jerzy

LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, pp. 38-39, original, in Lithuanian.

[6] Wejwery (Veiveriai), a small town 18 km southwest of Kowno. There was a teacher's seminary there whose prefect was Rev. Pius Andziulis, one of the first candidates for the renewed Congregation of Marian Priests (EL, 6, pp. 84-85).

[7] Maria Kacarauskaitiene, sister of Rev. Buczys. After her husband's death, she had in her care six young children and very little money. Rev. Buczys could join the Congregation only after ensuring the support of her family.

[8] See Document 10, note 2.

No. 13. Request by General W. Sekowski to Pius X to preserve the existence of the Marians in an extraordinary manner, and a power of attorney for Rev. J. Matulewicz to handle matters related to the further existence of the Order

Mariampole, July 20, 1909

Holy Father,

In the Russian Empire, the State government has abolished all orders and monastic communities. The Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, approved by Pope Pius VI on the 17th of November, 1786, also has been unable to accept novices since 1864. Thusly, from all of us Marian priests that have ever existed, only I remain. All the others have already died. Since I am also already of advanced age and I do not enjoy good health, it may so happen that soon, after I die, the Congregation will be completely extinguished unless its further existence is provided for in some extraordinary manner with the consent of the Holy See.

Since everybody believes that certain foci of monastic life are necessary in our hearts and at the same time there are candidates who for a long time have desired to join our Congregation, having conscientiously considered all this, we have arrived at the conclusion that — if no other solution can be found because of the government bans — the Congregation of Marian Fathers should be allowed by consent of the Holy See to conduct its life without any external tokens of our vocation.

Therefore, I implore that the Holy See, considering the impediments to monastic life that exist here, exempt us from wearing the monastic robe.

I also humbly implore that I may, immediately and without impediment, allow the Reverend Jerzy Matulewicz, Doctor of Theology, Professor of Dogmatic Theology and Sociology in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, whom I have known very well for many years as a priest of fiery zeal, exemplary conduct, and sincere commitment to the Holy See, who is knowledgeable of the laws and

principles of monastic life in general and especially those of the Congregation of Marian Fathers as well as its constitutions, to profess his first annual monastic vows in the Congregation of Marian Fathers in order that, as a result of my sudden death, said Congregation should not cease to exist; also, that other candidates that might apply may begin their novitiate or trial.

I, the Superior General of the Order of Marian Priests, inasmuch as this is within my power, confer in the Lord on said Reverend Jerzy Matulewicz all authorizations and powers of attorney so that he might handle on my behalf the matter of the further existence of our Congregation and its continuity within the Holy See.

With due reverence, worship, and obedience toward the Holy See.

Your Humble Servant in Christ,
Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers,
Theological Candidate,
Reverend Wincenty Sekowski

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, p. 10, copy, in Latin.

No. 14. Letter of Rev. J. Matulewicz to Rev Fr. Buczys concerning motives of his journey to Rome

Warsaw, July 23, 1909

Dear Frank,

I have just received your letter and I am answering it right away. I don't know if you remember that, as we were both saying, we must by no means bypass the bishops and that the Mohylev Administrator must know about everything. I was even saying that permission from the Sejny Administrator is needed. This matter seems to be so clear that there are not any doubts. I am not going to Rome in order to bypass the local authorities, but just the opposite. The purpose of my trip, as can be

concluded from the conversations with Bishop Ruszkiewicz, cannot be different than:

1) to find out what the highest Church authority thinks in general about our intentions; will it allow us to try such a life or will it order us to cease and desist from our intentions from the very outset because, as Bishop Ruszkiewicz had said, this is "a different kind of life" than the usual monastic life. He hopes that the Holy Father will be eager to allow such a life, because he has highly praised this lifestyle for women in female monasteries. Bishop Ruszkiewicz said that the Holy Father may extend his permission personally if he so chooses, of course if the matter is presented by influential people;

2) again according to Bishop Ruszkiewicz, we must become aware of how Rome will react to the changes in the Marian Congregation, because the very fact that the Marians are becoming a secret community, as Bishop Ruszkiewicz noted, represents a change in the constitutions and this must not be done without Rome's consent;

3) I will add this from myself: it will be good to find out where and how to handle matters in Rome, for I have a premonition that if Rome praises our intentions and gives us consent to begin this kind of life, it will be necessary to apply constantly to Rome for all kinds of dispensations and permissions while living under such complicated circumstances;

4) I want to find out for sure from such competent personages as Bucceroni[1] or Ledochowski[2] or the Secretary of the Congregation what the necessary formalities are. Do we need permission from the Administrator of Sejny or Mohylev; will I need *litteras testimoniales et dimissorias* from Kielce? This cannot be found out outside of Rome. We would be continuously lost. When we find out about everything in Rome, we shall know whom to approach, whom to ask for documents. Only then will it really be possible to begin working with the appropriate local authorities.

[1] See Document 12, note 4.

[2] See Document 12, note 3.

This is why I finally decided to go to Rome, so that we can ultimately find out if we ought to implement our intentions and how to do it so as not to be unnecessarily at a loss later. I believe that in approaching Rome for this purpose we are not interfering with local Church authority nor do we in any way infringe upon anybody's rights by receiving guidance from Rome as to how to proceed. Certainly this journey will be beneficial. We shall do best by starting the task from what is most important. I am not sure if we shall succeed in obtaining all of the permissions immediately. I am not so optimistic. All that I want is to reach the source and find out how and where to proceed so as not to lose our way; and, so that God and the Church will be pleased with us, not to diverge even in the smallest manner from the will, requirements, and guidelines of the Church. I hope that the best place to find this out best is in Rome.

By a strange coincidence, I received the letter of authorization from W. Sekowski[3] and at the same time notification that I had received a passport. Tomorrow, on July 24 at 2:25 p.m. I am setting out on my journey. Please pray ardently for the success of the journey, so that everything will be accomplished according to the will of God and the requirements of the Church. If you are leaving Gielgudyszki,[4] please send your address to Warsaw to 24 Piekna Street. Maybe I will be able to keep you abreast of things. I don't intend to stop anywhere on my way, because that isn't my purpose. In Rome I shall only visit a few holy sites. I shall especially pray at the graves of Sts. Peter and Paul so that, imbued with their spirit while starting a new life, we might serve God and the Church. I will pray that, committed to the spirit of these great propagators of the Gospels, we will be able to fight the enemies of God and the Church successfully and that we will be able, if it is God's will, to propagate His faith, in the East and not

[3] See Document 12.
[4] See Document 10, note 1.

just in Lithuania. You may tell Rev. Szeszkewiczius[5] about our intentions, but it is too early for a conversation about it with Rev. Grigaitis.[6]

For the time being, "God bless the good work." I shall write from Rome. Pray eagerly that the will of God be accomplished.

I kiss you,
Jerzy

LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, pp. 44-45, original, in Lithuanian.

[5] Szeszkewiczius, Vincas (1876-died in Siberia), graduated from the seminary in Sejny and ordained as a priest in 1900. He contributed to Lithuanian periodicals. He was regarded as a candidate to the Marians.

[6] Grigaitis, Aleksandras (1877-1955), studied in Sejny, Fribourg, and Jerusalem. From 1909 to 1917 he taught Holy Scripture in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg and from 1922 at the University of Kowno. He was regarded as a candidate to the Congregation.

No. 15. Letter from J. Matulewicz to Fr. Buczys concerning the audience with the Prefect of the Congregation of the Religious, Jose Vives y Tuto

Rome, July 29, 1909

Dear Frank,

I did the right thing by going to Rome. Here I will be able to find out exactly what we should stick to and how to proceed. At the beginning it was a little difficult for me. I didn't quite know whom to approach. Now I have found the path. I submitted the papers as appropriate. I made the first step. Yesterday evening, I visited Cardinal Vives y Tuto, the Prefect of the Congregation of the Religious.[1] He

[1] Vives y Tuto, Jose (1854-1913), a Spanish Capuchin Cardinal from 1908, Prefect of the Congregation of the Religious. Author of numerous works, especially on the theology of inner life. The renewal of the Marian Fathers was accomplished under his inspiration and direction.

welcomed me very warmly, like the best father. I was very surprised that he was so well informed about the matters of our Church and Congregations, which was very helpful to me. I would say just a word and he immediately grasped everything and gave me an answer or advice right away. He promised that he would take care of everything for us. He will assign a special secretary to study our case, and I am to meet with him on Saturday. I will hand him an appropriate memorandum and I will try to get the most precise directions concerning our further conduct so as not to go astray unnecessarily. Later I will let you know about the details of the conversation with the Cardinal as well as other matters.

There is unbelievable heat here. I am even getting dizzy and sweat is pouring out of me, but I am glad that things are beginning to move forward. I hope that they have taken a turn toward the glory of God.

Pray with trust, remembering our cause.

I am kissing you.

Yours, Jerzy

LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, p. 48, original, in Lithuanian.

No. 16. Letter from Rev. J. Matulewicz to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Religious (J. Vives y Tuto) concerning the further existence and necessary reform of the Marian Fathers' Congregation

Rome, July 30, 1909

Your Eminence,

I, Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz, Doctor of Theology, Professor of Dogmatic Theology and Sociology in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, have received from Father Wincenty Sekowski, Superior General of the Marian Fathers' Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, confirmed in 1786 by

Pope Pius VI, all rights and authorizations in God to handle all matters of the Congregation at the Holy See. I decided to provide this explanation and submit requests concerning the further existence of the Congregation for the gracious consideration of Your Eminence.

I. In the Russian Empire, the State authority has abolished all orders and monastic congregations.

The Congregation of Marian Fathers also could not, from 1864 and to this day, accept novices. In this manner, the Marian Congregation will soon cease to exist unless, disregarding the State's ban, it continues to accept novices and conduct monastic life, as far as possible without revealing it to the State authorities. That such kind of monastic life is possible in Russia is proven by numerous other monastic congregations of this kind that are thriving and are very beneficial to the Church.

Therefore, the Congregation of Marian Fathers humbly implores that it also might, without any regard whatsoever for the vicious State laws but abiding only by the laws of the Church — our Holy Mother — continue to exist as much as possible without betraying its monastic allegiance to the authorities by any conspicuous signs.

II. Subsequently, both because of the difficulties to which monastic life is exposed in our parts as well as because of the changed situation and labors being undertaken, certain changes should be made in the Marian constitutions. For example: as it is easy to see, it would be impossible to continue to wear monastic robes and so prudence would dictate that instead of solemn vows, the three simple vows should be professed. Finally, it would be desirable that the constitutions of the Marian Fathers' Congregation should be adjusted to the Standards issued by the Holy Congregation of the Religious in 1901.[1]

Therefore, we humbly request

1) that the Holy See graciously grant dispensation from wearing monastic robes;

[1]Normae secundant quas S. Congr. Episcoporum et Reglarium procedere solet in approbandis novis institutis votorum simplicium, Romae 1901.

2) that instead of solemn vows we be allowed to profess the three simple vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience, each year for six years and then in perpetuity;

3) that the constitutions of the Congregation of Marian Fathers be changed, if possible, in accordance with the Standards issued by the Holy Congregation of the Religious in 1901, and that we be allowed to test such constitutions with the consent of the Holy See.

III. Because of the ban imposed by the lay government, novices could not be accepted, and from all the Marian religious who have ever existed presently only Father Wincenty Sekowski, the Superior General, is alive. All the others have already died. Even Father Wincenty Sekowski is advanced in age and does not enjoy good health. In this situation it seems appropriate and even necessary that one of the priests desiring to join the Marian Fathers' Congregation profess his annual vows immediately so that if Father Wincenty Sekowski dies suddenly, the Congregation itself does not become extinct. It would also be a good thing if others who feel the same vocation might immediately begin their novitiate or test.

Therefore, I humbly ask the Holy See:

1) That I, Jerzy Matulewicz, who for a long time have felt called to the vocation of a religious and have inasmuch as possible endeavored to arrange my life as a priest in accordance with the monastic regulations and since I believe that I am thoroughly familiar with the regulations governing monastic life, both general and specifically pertaining to the Marian Congregation, could immediately profess the first annual vows in the Marian Fathers' Congregation, any impediments that may appear notwithstanding;

2) that Rev. Franciszek Buczys, Doctor of Theology, Professor of Fundamental Theology or Apologetics in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, who for several years has also felt called to the vocation of a religious, be immediately allowed to begin his novitiate, any impediments notwithstanding;

3) that others, either priests or laymen, desiring to join the Congregation of Marian Fathers, may begin their period of trial;

4) that, for the time being, the Novitiate be located in St. Petersburg with the consent of the local Bishop Ordinary.

IV. Since in the Russian Empire the vicious lay laws do not permit religious congregations to live their lives in public view, we eagerly implore the Holy See that matters pertaining to the Marian Fathers' Congregation not be published, but discreetly communicated either directly to the Congregation itself or to the appropriate local Ordinaries.

With due reverence, dedication, and respect,

Your humble servant in Christ,

Jerzy Matulewicz

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, pp. 1-3, original, in Latin

No. 17. Letter from J. Matulewicz to Fr. Buczys concerning the audience with Pope Pius X

Rome, July 31, 1909

Dear Frank,

A week has passed since I came to Rome. Yesterday I went to the Holy Father and received a benediction for myself and for all those for whom I wanted it. Today I went to the Congregation in our cause. I have been promised an answer and the necessary directives the day after tomorrow, which is Monday. If I receive this answer, perhaps I'll be able to leave on Tuesday. I'll tell you about everything when I get back. Before we meet anywhere, please be so kind as not to leave Gielgudyszki[1] until you hear from me from Warsaw. I didn't expect everyone here to be so helpful and kind, making everything easy for me.

[1] See Document 10, note 1.

There is an incredible heat wave here. The temperature is reaching 44 and even up to 50 degrees [Centigrade, 111.2°F - 122°F]. All day long you drip with sweat. I feel healthy, so maybe God is giving me health seeing that this work has been undertaken to His glory as well as for the welfare and benefit of the Church.

I have visited very few sites because I have no time. I had to write documents and handle matters, and I haven't come for sightseeing anyway.

I send you friendly kisses

Jerzy

LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, p. 51, original, in Lithuanian.

No. 18. Preliminary Memorandum of the Congregation of the Religious concerning the renewal of the Congregation of the Marian Fathers

[Rome, August 2, 1909] [1]

Sejny [Diocese], 3544/09

Regarding the letter of recommendation from the Bishop Ordinary of Warsaw, he has approved acceptance of the applicants in question to the Marian Fathers' Congregation after they have secured effective consent of the surviving Superior General. After three months, those applicants will need to reapply with letters of recommendation from the Most Reverend Bishops Ordinary of Mohylev, Warsaw and Sejny.[2]

(sealed)

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, p. 1, original, in Latin.

[1] Document without location and date. It was issued on August 2, 1909. See Document 19.

[2] No signature. The document was written in his own hand by Undersecretary Rodolfo Caroli at the order of the Prefect of the Congregation of the Religious Jose Vives y Tuto directly on the letter of request written by Fr. Matulewicz (Document 16).

No. 19. Letter of Rev. J. Matulewicz to Rev. Fr. Buczys informing him about how matters were handled in Rome

Warsaw, August 6, 1909

Dear Frank,

Yesterday, immediately upon my return from Rome, I sent a letter to you.[1] Today I am writing again because I learned that you are in Gielgudyszki, so I am sure you will receive it.

A moment ago M. Suryn[2] received a letter from you. The reference is to untrue information concerning the Polonizing role of the Sisters in Lithuania. You both should not raise these matters again, because everything has already been clarified and we know who has been broadcasting that information in Lithuania. You are beyond reproach in this matter, and you didn't need to take the words I spoke in the heat of discussion to heart. We shall talk about it when we see each other.

In my last letter, I briefly mentioned a few things concerning the results of my trip. Now I want to expand upon this. I sent you two or maybe three letters from Rome,[3] I don't remember because my brain is too tired; apparently you haven't received them. After you get this letter, please answer right away because I am concerned that my correspondence is not reaching you.

When I arrived, I turned to the Resurrectionist Fathers. I wanted to stay at their place. It turned out that they did not accommodate priests, but they recommended an affordable and fairly nice little hotel run by Muller, a German. The next day, Monday (I had come on Sunday), one of the Resurrectionist Fathers directed me to Prelate Antonucci[4] to

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[1] It was skipped, as it duplicates this letter.

[2] Suryn, Maria (1860-1910), for many years a teacher in the establishment of Cecylia Plater-Zyberk in Warsaw and a board member of the Congregation of Sister Messengers of the Heart of Jesus. The reference in text is to the false rumors as to the role of convent sisters in imposing Polish cultural influence in Lithuania.

[3] See Documents 15 and 17.

[4] Antonucci, Giuseppi, Undersecretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

whom I had recommendations. We scheduled a meeting for 5 in the afternoon to discuss the whole matter. With the same Resurrectionist Father, on the same morning, we went to call on Ledochowski[5] but we didn't find him at home. He had gone to inspect monastic houses. After my return to Warsaw I found a letter from Ledochowska[6] in which she explained the same thing to me and advised me to approach the Father General. Because I hadn't read the letter from Ledochowska before my departure, I didn't know that the General could be approached, so I only left my calling card with Father Ledochowski. Finally I went to Bucceroni[7] but he wasn't there either. At that time he was on retreat, and I didn't go again so as not to waste time after I found out that the matter could be handled without him.

At 5 in the afternoon, I set out to see Prelate Antonucci. I presented the whole matter to him. I handed him all the papers, which he promised to forward as appropriate the next day. Even though he is from the Congregation for Catholic Education, he promised to act as a go-between. If I had known beforehand whom to approach, it would have been easier to arrange everything without his help. Next time I will know all the paths. Of course I had to wait all day until I received information concerning further procedures. I was promised answers on Wednesday afternoon.

Tuesday morning I went to Reverend Sapieha,[8] but he only had enough time to say hello. He was hurrying to a meeting with the Holy Father. He invited me to come back on Wednesday at half past nine, so I went and I presented the matter to him in the greatest detail I could. He deals primarily with diplomacy, but I could not slight him and fail to call on him. He promised to keep everything in secrecy. Later I saw him twice more. We shall talk about it.

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[5] See Document 12, note 3.

[6] See Document 12, note 2.

[7] See Document 12, note 4.

[8] Sapieha, Adam Stefan (1867-1952). He worked in the Roman Curia 1905-1911. In 1911 he became the Bishop of Krakow.

On Wednesday at 5 o'clock I appeared at Antonucci's. I learned from him only to whom the papers had been forwarded. He promised to guide me on Saturday morning to Undersecretary Caroli[9] who deals with matters such as ours. Sapieha advised me not to fail to approach Vives y Tuto,[10] the Prefect of the Congregation, who understands and knows our situation. As a religious, he is a profound expert in these matters, and moreover he is very kind and approachable.

I was told that the Cardinal receives visitors every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., so I went to see him and, as I was the first one to come, I was the first one to be admitted. I explained everything to him as best I could; a word or two sufficed to receive guidance or advice from him, so well does he know our situation and his subject matter. He promised to handle everything and do whatever is possible. He gave me a lot of advice. He advised that I should turn again to Undersecretary Caroli.

On Thursday and Friday there was a meeting of the Congregation so I could not go there with my business. Taking advantage of this break, I composed something like a memorandum about our cause[11] which I based on what we had discussed in Mariampole and on the conversation with the Cardinal, appending his directives. I presented this as an explanation and as requests which required an answer. I had to be careful with every word and phrase so as to make the text as brief as possible. I was working all day Thursday and Friday. I shall convey the entire contents of my conversation with the Cardinal when we meet.

The first matter I raised in our conversation was the desire to save the Marian Order. The answer to this was the following: your cause is just; as long as there is at least one man, he has full right to preserve the Congregation. Then he said: why should you wear robes? Dress like all other priests. Later I found out that the Holy Father is very

[9] Caroli, Rodolfo (1869-1921), Undersecretary of the Congregation of the Religious. In 1917 he was nominated as internuncio in Bolivia and a titular archbishop.

[10] See Document 15, note 1.

[11] See Document 16.

much in favor of orders without robes. He believes them to be very useful in today's conditions. Then he asked me if I knew the Standards. Then he said: "You will do best to compose everything according to the Standards. You may save the old Rule as a keepsake, but the most important things are the constitutions." Then we discussed the novitiate. He advised that we set it up in a large city where it would be easier to hide. He promised to grant permission to profess vows. He was discussing various things, some of which he almost took out of my mouth. He kept repeating, strive for *vita communis,*[12] "because without it there is no monastery." Then he directed me to present recommendations from the bishops when we apply the second time. For the time being, the letters of authorization that Bishop Ruszkiewicz[13] and Father Sekowski[14] gave me were sufficient. Ultimately, it turned out that to enter a monastery it is not necessary to have permission from one's bishop. Admission can be made without it. It only must be known that the candidate is not "sentenced to ecclesiastical penalties or in debt."

Later on Saturday I went with my letter to Caroli. I spoke with him again, and I handed him the letter.[15] He promised to talk with the Cardinal and with some other people and to give me an answer on Monday. When I went back on Monday, August 2, he was holding the answer that he had written in his own hand on my letter or memorandum. The answer was as follows:

"De Seyna, 3544/09.

Attenta commendatione Reverendissimi Ordinarii Varsaviensis, Eidem committitur facultas agregandi Congregationi CC. RR. Marianorum Oratores, de quibus agitur: accedente authentica attestatione Superioris Generalis superstitis.

[12] *Vita communis* — communal life.
[13] See Document 11.
[14] See Document 13.
[15] See Document 16.

Et post saltem tres menses ab hac aggregatione, Oratores iterum recurrant commendati a Reverendissimis Ordinariis Mohiloviensi, Varsaviensi et de Seyna."[16]

Underneath there is the seal of the Congregation.

This *recurrant* means, as implied by my letter and by what I was told at the Congregation, that we then have to present ourselves with all the documents and constitutions, amended and sorted in accordance with the Standards and canon law.

What do you think? May I sent you a copy of the Latin memorandum? Please answer and I shall send it right away so you know what's going on.

And, as soon as we join, because I wrote about you too and I mentioned others without naming names, the Congregation will thus be revived, as I was told; we as its members will be able to contribute to straightening out its statutes.

Bishop Ruszkiewicz is not here yet. He is taking a course of treatment at Rayatz, Switzerland. I wrote to him about this. When he returns, we will have to meet at his place. This will be the beginning of the effort. Now we need to begin preparing the statutes and discuss matters with Sejny.

I don't know if Sekowski is in Mariampole. I wrote a few words to him. I will also let him know about everything.

I will be waiting for your letter. I kiss you.

Jerzy

LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, pp. 56-58, original, in Lithuanian.

[16] For translation, see Document 18.

No. 20. Letter of Rev. J. Matulewicz to Rev. Fr. Buczys regarding the necessity of meeting

Warsaw, August 12, 1909

Dear Frank,

I have just received your letter of August 9. Apparently you have not received any of my letters from Warsaw. I mailed the first one on August 5[1] on the very day I came back to Warsaw; the second one on the next day which was August 6 was very long, containing a detailed description of my trip;[2] and the third was mailed on August 9 -10.[3] A week has passed since I've returned to Warsaw and I still haven't been able to get in touch with you, or with Rev. Sekowski. I am waiting for news like a parasol mushroom waits for rain. Therefore, I was very happy when I received a letter from you although it did not contain what I was waiting for. I sent letters to Father Sekowski everywhere I could. I found out from Rev. Draugelis[4] that he is at Druskienniki undergoing treatment. Here is his address in case you need it: Druskienniki Post Office, Grodno Province, House of Mr. Andrzykowicz. Of course, I wrote to him right away, but I have not yet received any answer. I asked him at least to send a cable confirming receipt of my letter so that I could write more extensive information to him.

I didn't receive your letter in Rome. I had probably already left before it arrived, so I don't know what you were talking about with Naujokas.[5]

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[1] Skipped here.

[2] See Document 19.

[3] The letter of August 11, 1909; it was omitted.

[4] Draugelis, Vladas (1880-1940), ordained as priest in 1903. In 1922 he joined the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

[5] Narjauskas (Narjowski, Naujokas), Jurgis (1876-1943), studied in Sejny and Rome where he received his doctorate in law at the Gregorianum. He worked at the consistory and the seminary in Sejny. During 1919-1922, he was the unofficial representative of Lithuania at the Holy See.

If you think I should know the contents of your conversation, please write me about it because the letter you sent to Rome will be lost there.

All this indicates that we should meet at Mariampole at the end of this month. After discussing everything with Rev. Sekowski, we will have to go to Warsaw to see Bishop Ruszkiewicz and from there set out for St. Petersburg. If we have to go a day or so later, it won't matter. I will deliver two or three lectures for you since we need to accomplish what we have started, and that's the way it is.

Going to Sejny is not necessary at this time. It can be put off, although I believe it would be better to settle matters now since later it will be difficult to get there, especially from St. Petersburg.

Don't be stingy with your time, Brother, and write as often as possible, because I am waiting for your letters. I don't want to make decisions all by myself in such an important matter. Perhaps I was handling matters too high-handedly as best I could in Rome, assuming that you and Rev. Sekowski will accept everything. My only consideration was the glory of God and the benefit of the Church as I conceived it in my obviously weak and unworthy understanding. How much I would like to talk with you and Rev. Sekowski now! But one must be patient. We must make arrangements as to which day we will meet in Mariampole, probably the 26th, so that we will have enough time to go to Sejny if we so decide and certainly to Warsaw.

You did very well convincing Grigaitis[6] to hire one more servant.

I am kissing you,

Jerzy

LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, pp. 63-64, original, in Lithuanian.

[6] See Document 14, note 6. The purpose was to create a job for a servant in the St. Petersburg Academy which could be given to a candidate to the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

No. 21. Letter from Rev. J. Matulewicz to Rev. Fr. Buczys concerning the proposed meeting in Warsaw

Warsaw, August 18, 1909

Dear Brother!

Thank you very much for your last letter of August 15. These letters take an incredibly long time. A week goes by before we can communicate. I still have no news as to whether Rev. Sekowski will come to Warsaw from Druskienniki. As I wrote, it would be the most convenient for us to meet in Warsaw. Here we can handle matters and then go straight to St. Petersburg. I wrote a second letter to Druskienniki. I hope to receive information soon and then it will be clear what to do. On August 24 (new style [calendar]), Bishop Ruszkiewicz is returning. I will try to meet him right away and find out if he will be able to receive us. As soon as I obtain information from Reverend Sekowski and Bishop Ruszkiewicz, I'll send you a cable with an arrival date in Warsaw.

So, Brother, be ready for travel and wait for my cable, because otherwise you won't have time to get ready. It's better that you shouldn't write again to Madame Suryn[1] about monastic orders lest you make a mistake; we'll talk about it.

I am glad that your sister's affairs are taking a good turn. May God help to arrange everything soon! We shall talk when we meet, and there is a lot to talk about.

I kiss you.

Rev. Jerzy

LVA, set 1674, inv. 1, vol. 99, pp. 69-70, original, in Lithuanian.

[1] See Document 19, note 2.

No. 22. Protocol of Acceptance of Rev. J. Matulewicz and Rev. Fr. Buczys to the Congregation of Marian Fathers by the Vicar General of the Warsaw Archdiocese Bishop Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz

Warsaw, August 29, 1909

I, Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz, the Berysene Bishop and Suffragan of Warsaw, hereby affirm that — being authorized by the Holy Congregation of the Religious by letter No. 3544/09 — on August 29, 1909, I accepted into the Congregation of Marian Fathers in the presence of the Superior General of said Congregation, Wincenty Sekowski, applicants Jerzy Matulewicz and Franciszek Buczys, Doctors of Theology and Professors in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg: I allowed Jerzy Matulewicz to profess his first annual vows and Franciszek Buczys to begin his novitiate.

This Act is confirmed by signatures of the Most Reverend Superior General and the applicants.

Superior General:	Rev. Wincenty Sekowski
Applicants:	Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz Rev. Franciszek Buczys

I have signed and ordered that the seal be affixed hereon confirming the trustworthiness of the above.

+ Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz

Vicar General of the Warsaw Archdiocese

(seal)

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, p. 13, original, in Latin.

No. 23. Report of Rev. J. Matulewicz to Superior General W. Sekowski on the Life of the Marian Congregation in St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg, October 3/16, 1909

Most Reverend Father,

I would like to report at least briefly on developments here. On the way from Warsaw to St. Petersburg we were composing a plan for our lives. We decided to liberate ourselves from all other employment outside of the Academy and devote all our free time to our cultivation, sanctification, and enlightenment in divine matters and in things related to our condition. However, we have failed in this despite the best will and greatest effort on our part. We find consolation in the fact that no divine work has ever grown without impediments and difficulties. Instead of less work, we now have much more of it, so that little time is left for enlightenment in divine matters. We know that it is not only by prayer that man praises God, but also through work; but prayer is also necessary and there is not enough time for it.

After we arrived in St. Petersburg we went immediately to see Rev. Bishop Denisevitch;[1] we presented all our plans and intentions with all sincerity and we showed him the papers. His Excellency praised everything and promised his help and support. However, despite our pleas, he absolutely did not want to relieve Rev. Buczys from his duties as professor in the Seminary, so now poor Rev. Buczys has to do the work of three people: (1) he teaches Apologetics in the Academy; (2) he teaches Apologetics and Dogmatic Theology in the Seminary; (3) moreover he must act temporarily as the spiritual Father in the Academy; (4) once a week he goes to confess the Ursuline Sisters.

I also have a lot of work: (1) I am teaching Dogmatic Theology in the Academy; (2) I am teaching Sociology in the Seminary (one hour a week); (3) I also am teaching Sociology in the Academy until a new

[1] See Document 12, note 5.

professor is confirmed; (4) moreover, I am performing the duties of an inspector in the Academy temporarily until Rev. Canon Debinski[2] is confirmed; (5) I was careless enough to promise Rev. Dambrauskas[3] from Kovno to put on paper the three public lectures which I delivered this year in Kovno for the "Draugija;"[4] I had to fulfill my promise. But this last burden has already fallen off my shoulders. Now I will be able to begin work on composing the constitutions in accordance with the Standards.

Despite all this work, we are healthy, thank God, and we are bearing up, although at times we don't get enough sleep. Apparently God gives us His support and blessings. Rev. Buczys was a little unwell for a few days because of overwork, but this has now passed.

Therefore, very little time is left for self-cultivation, but we are doing the best we can. Together with the students, we are attending all prayers and services, and we are meditating with them. In addition to that, we are doing spiritual readings and every day we say part of the Holy Rosary; we also are striving to live in union with God and to rise to Him in acts of ardent prayer. We have no time left for other exercises. We try to keep poverty by limiting our expenses and by limiting our needs as much as possible. I cover the common expenses and Rev. Buczys puts away his savings to be able to liberate himself sooner from obligations toward his family.

Mr. Songailo,[5] a student whom we have mentioned, has attached himself to us wholeheartedly and committed himself completely. He is already living at Rev. Buczys's who has allowed him one small room in his apartment. We share food all together. He is a very modest, kind,

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[2] Debinski, Karol (1858-1943), during 1909-1911 taught Pastoral Theology and was an inspector in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg.

[3] See Document 10, note 2.

[4] "Draugiga," a monthly magazine in Lithuanian devoted to literature, education, and politics, published in Kowno from 1907-1923. It was edited by Rev. Aleksandras Dambrauskas. The articles referred to were published in 1909, Vol.8. No. 31-32, pp. 327-384.

[5] Songailo (Sungaila), Konstantinas, a candidate to the Congregation, left the community.

and devout young man. We are now teaching him to speak Polish and we slowly are getting him into the habits of spiritual life. However, we want him to graduate from the University; it will be useful for us; moreover, we are going to teach him philosophy. We beg you to send him your fatherly blessing.[6]

We also are trying to establish and maintain relations with other young people, but the lack of time makes it hard for us. I wrote to one of the priests who expressed a desire to join with us. He will contact you himself, most Reverend Father.[7] Please, dear Father, indulge some of his views and weaknesses; otherwise we know that his heart is good and that he can be directed. He loves God and the Church ardently so we expect that with God's help he will be malleable and in harmony with us. I believe in the power of God's love and that it will lead us to everything good. We shall also approach other priests, exercising prudent caution.

I intend now to begin sorting out our documents; therefore, please do send the papers that the Dear Father has mentioned; please have them sewn in canvas and shipped to me personally as a valuable parcel. Also, please let me know if the Dear Father has had any opportunity to see the Reverend Administrator of Sejny and if you discussed anything with him. We shall also appreciate very much even a few words from the Dear Father about how things are there and how your health is.

We all greet the Dear Father warmly and we ask for your prayers and blessing.

Rev. J. Matulewicz

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, draft, in Polish.

[6] i.e., to accept him into the Congregation.

[7] Probably Rev. Jonas Totoraitis.

No. 24. Consent of the Administrator of the Sejny Diocese, Jozef Antonowicz, for Rev. J. Matulewicz to join the Congregation of Marian Fathers

Sejny, October 22, 1909

Jozef Antonowicz,[1] Prelate, custodian of the Cathedral, Chapter Vicar or General Administrator of the Diocese of Sejny or Augustow.

> I hereby affirm to all those concerned that there are no impediments on our part for the Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz, priest in the Kielce diocese, Doctor of Theology, regular Professor in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, to join the Congregation of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, located in Mariampole in the diocese of Sejny.[2]
>
> Jozef Antonowicz
> Prelate of the Cathedral, Ordinary
> Chancellor: J. Narjowski

(seal)

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 3, p. 24, original, in Latin, No. 1626.

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[1] Antonowicz, Jozef (1853-1916), in 1903-1910 he managed the Sejny Diocese as its Chapter Vicar. Then he was the Vicar General for Bishop A. Karas (EK, I, p. 672).

[2] This letter, issued at the request of Rev. Wincenty Sekowski, did not meet the expectations of Rev. Matulewicz and was not sent to Rome. After studying the entire matter and the documents of the Congregation, the Administrator wrote a new one — see Document 26.

No. 25. Letter from Superior General W. Sekowski to Rev. J. Matulewicz concerning receipt of letter No. 24

Mariampole, October 26, 1909

Reverend Professor

and Most Beloved Brother in Christ,

I received your letter of October 3/16, 1909,[1] for which I thank you. I could not answer any sooner. I was waiting for news from Sejny. Over a week ago, Rev. Narjowski,[2] Secretary of the Sejny Consistory, came here. To him I blathered everything that was happening and how things are. I also asked him to inform the Sejny Administrator, asking him to keep it all secret until the appropriate time and to provide in writing the formal documents needed for the two of you.[3] The letter indicates that Rev. Buczys received a similar message.

Everything went successfully, because the day before yesterday I received what I had asked for and I attach it hereto. If there are any shortcomings, please forgive me because I didn't know for sure what the form of the letter should be, but I think this should suffice. I could not go to Sejny in person because of a stomach ailment. Neither can I go today, no matter how I could have wished or tried to do so. I don't know how long this will continue, but now I am incapacitated. But in spite of that, luckily I can still work in the church and in the Sunday school, and I even visited the sick twice.

Last Thursday, Rev. Totoraitis came to see me. He mentioned in passing that he too would like to revere the Holy Mother of the Immaculate Conception[4] in a more special way, to which I responded that this is a sublimely beautiful thought and I urged him to persevere in his endeavor.

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[1] See Document 23.

[2] See Document 20, note 5.

[3] See Document 24. Rev. Buczys apparently received a similar letter.

[4] i.e., he would like to become a Marian — see Document 4, note 3.

For the time being, I am not sending the document we discussed because, upon second review, I see no need for it and I think it is not timely, as someone might draw some far-reaching conclusions, whereas this is the most ordinary thing. It will become obvious to you as soon as we first see each other in Mariampole.

Nothing new is happening here. Everything goes on as it has. May things just not deteriorate.

At this opportunity, I consider it my obligation and good fortune to send you both my greetings and deep respect, with a request to commend me to God in the Holy Mass.

Your servant,
Rev. Sekowski, Marian

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 97, original, in Polish.

No. 26. Letter from the Chapter Vicar of the Sejny Diocese, J. Antonowicz, to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Religious, Jose Vives y Tuto, recommending the Marians

Sejny, January 10, 1910

Your Eminence,

Based on the decree of the Congregation for the Religious No. 3544 issued in the year 1909,[1] I consider it an honor to recommend to Your Eminence, with due reverence and respect, the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, which has a house in Mariampole, Diocese of Sejny or Augustow.

[1] See Document 18.

The Marian Fathers' Congregation has existed in the diocese for over 100 years. It was abolished by the State authorities, without even considering its usefulness in administering the diocese, in the year 1904. At present, with the help of God's grace, it is undergoing a Renewal, as there are priests who feel the vocation to the religious condition and who want to serve God within monastic wall. Therefore a bright hope has shone, so that the Marian Fathers' Congregation will soon grow and will be very helpful to our Holy Mother the Church in kindling Christian piety among the faithful, in eradicating vices and fighting errors which are heaped upon even the pious Lithuanians by atheists and socialists in these unpropitious times.

It is with joy that I recommend to Your Eminence those priests who have joined that Congregation, namely: Rev. Wincenty Sekowski, candidate in Theology, once the Superior General of the Order and now the only Marian still alive. This Father, having professed solemn vows in 1861, still sojourns in the monastery, performs the Holy Service in a praiseworthy manner, and remains most eagerly committed to the redemption of souls. I also recommend Professors of the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, Doctors of Theology and priests: Jerzy Matulewicz from the diocese of Kielce and Franciszek Buczys from the diocese of Sejny who were included in the Congregation of Marian Fathers by the Bishop Ordinary of Warsaw on August 29, 1909. They both are very committed sons of the Church. They lead exemplary lives. They shine with piety in the exercise of holy service. They are full of zeal to save souls. They give thorough hope that they will educate, by word and deed, both individual faithful and whole societies that have been led astray by the errors of atheists and socialists. Moreover, they provide moral certainty that they will never blemish priestly honor and the condition of a monk by unworthy conduct or by performing any employment incompatible with the condition of a monk.

Conveying this message, I assure you of my deepest respect for Your Eminence, humbly kissing the holy purple.

The humble and obedient servant of Your Eminence,
Jozef Antonowicz
Chapter Vicar
of the Sejny or Agustow Diocese[2]

ACIVCSA. S26, vol. 1, original, in Latin

[2] This letter was requested by Rev. Franciszek Buczys who also produced the relevant documents during the Christmas holidays. The Administrator sent the letter directly to the Congregation of the Religious.

No. 27. Letter from Rev. J. Matulewicz [to the Undersecretary for the Congregation for the Religious, Rodolfo Caroli][1] concerning the reason for the delay in sending the documents

St. Petersburg, February 7, 1910

Eminent Reverend Prelate,

Recently we received a letter from Rev. Giuseppe Antonucci in which he reminded us, on behalf of the Holy Congregation of the Religious, that in addition to letters of recommendation from the Ordinary of Sejny we should also send to said Congregation other documents concerning the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary.[2] Although I replied to Rev. Antonucci on this matter,[3] I decided to write to you as well, explaining the matter more

[1] The recipient of the letter is missing, but it is obvious from its contents and from the response (See Document 29) that it was R. Caroli.

[2] The letter written by order of the Congregation of the Religious on January 26, 1910, by G. Antonucci from the Congregation for Catholic Education (ACIVCSVA, Protocollum 1909, part 1, vol. 6900, No. 3544/09). The letter has not been found.

[3] The letter has not been found.

extensively because when I was handling the matter of the Marian Fathers in Rome and was going to the Holy Congregation of the Religious, I experienced moving benevolence and kindness on your part, Honored Reverend.

Most Reverend Prelate, we have not succeeded in preparing the documents for the Holy Congregation of the Religious as quickly as we had intended. There were the following reasons for that: soon after I returned from Rome and Warsaw to St. Petersburg, the academic year began. An inspector, one of the teachers in our Academy, had left.[4] At the request of the Academy's Rector, in addition to teaching dogmatic theology which I took upon myself to teach permenently, I had to teach sociology temporarily and had to assume the duties of inspector. This meant that up until the Christmas break, I have been fulfilling the duties of more than two people.

However, during that time I have also reviewed the old charters of the Marian Order, amending them in accordance with the Standards and the most recent guidelines of the Church. At this moment, they have been handed over to the printer.

Similarly, because of these activities as well as because such matters cannot be conferred to our mail, we could not obtain the letters of recommendation from our three Bishops Ordinary earlier than during the Christmas holidays. As soon as the holidays began, we went to the Ordinaries of Sejny and Warsaw. The former decided to send the letters himself to the Holy Congregation of the Religious,[5] while the latter forwarded them to us for sending.[6] For his part, the Bishop Ordinary of Mohylev promised that he would hand those letters to us as soon as our constitutions are printed.[7] We ourselves intend to send all the required documents to the Holy Congregation together with the new printed constitutions as soon as they come from the printing house.

[4] Debinski, Karol, see Document 23, note 2.
[5] See Document 26.
[6] See Document 28, Appendix 1.
[7] See Document 28, Appendix 4.

Therefore, Reverend Prelate, it is not through our fault or neglect that the cause which we take so much to our hearts is delayed, but because we have been over-burdened with work as well as because of other difficulties that had to be overcome.

Please be so kind as to answer the following questions: (1) Whether other letters of recommendation from the Bishops Ordinary of Warsaw and Mohylev should be sent to the Holy Congregation immediately, or is it better to wait until publication of the constitutions? (2) Is it sufficient to send the constitutions as newly amended and rewritten, or is it also necessary to send the reprinted Rules of the *Ten Virtues of the Most Holy Virgin Mary* based on which the Marian Fathers formerly lived?

It is very pleasant for me to let you know, Reverend Prelate, that our Congregation, despite so many difficulties to which monastic life in our parts is subject, is slowly reviving and growing. Currently, in addition to the still surviving Superior General, there are five of us priests in the Congregation.[8] Three of them are Doctors of Theology, one is a Doctor of Philosophy. Moreover, two other priests, Masters of Theology, are wholly determined to join us. They are only awaiting the consent of the Ordinary. There is also a group of seminarians and laymen aspiring to this kind of life. There is thus no shortage of those who feel a monastic vocation. The greatest impediment for us is the fact that we can act only in a discreet manner and in hiding because of the State laws and therefore we can inform only very few people about our lifestyle. However, we hope that with the help of God and support of the Holy See our Congregation will be revived and it will begin to grow.

I ask Your Reverence forgiveness for such an extensive letter and I thank you in advance for your benevolence for which I am humbly asking.

Your Servant in Christ,

Jerzy Matulewicz

Professor in the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg

ACIVCSVA, S26, vol. 1, original, in Latin

[8] General Wincenty Sekowski accepted the following priests into the Congregation on January 9, 1910: Pius Andziulis, Antanas Cywinski, and Jonas Totoraitis (LVA).

No. 28. Letter from J. Matulewicz [to the Undersecretary for the Congregation for the Religious, Rodolfo Caroli][1] to which he appends documents

St. Petersburg, April 17, 1910

Reverend Prelate,

With this letter, we are sending documents concerning the Institute of Marian Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. We suffered great impediments in collecting the necessary documents because such matters cannot be entrusted to the mail here, while because of our activities we could not undertake the necessary travel. This has caused the delay in the shipment of documents.

If some documents are missing, or if they have been improperly prepared, we humbly ask that it be brought to our attention. We shall endeavor to send the Holy Congregation of the Religious everything that is necessary.

A humble servant of the Reverend Prelate,
Jerzy Matulewicz

Please kindly reply to the following address:
Couvent des Ursulines a Cracovie (Autriche)
pour rem. A Mr. L'abbé Matulewicz

ACIVCSVA, S 25, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

[1] Letter without recipient. The name of R. Caroli can be found in the draft copy (LVA, set 1675, inv. vol. 27, p. 17).

Appendix 1: Letter of the Vicar General of the Warsaw Archdiocese K. Ruszkiewicz to Pius X, recommending the Marians

Warsaw, January 15, 1910

Holy Father,

I herewith recommend the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary which has been abolished by State law and has almost completely ceased to exist. Currently, however, it is at beginning of its Renewal.

There is no shortage of candidates who wish to undertake religious life, while at the same time male religious congregations are very much desirable in our parts. I hope that the Congregation of Marian Fathers will soon grow and contribute a lot of good to our Mother the Church as well as to the faithful. This can be expected even more since the Marian Fathers wish to base their constitutions and to organize the entire life of the Order upon the Standards issued by the Congregation for the Religious.

I also ardently support the still surviving Superior General of the Congregation of the Marian Fathers, Wincenty Sekowski, candidate of Theology, as well as priests Jerzy Matulewicz and Franciszek Buczys, Doctors of Theology and Professors of the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg whom, in accordance with the Response of the Holy Congregation for the Religious,[1] I enrolled into the Congregation of the Marian Fathers[2] by reason of their immaculate faith, piety of their lives, and eager care of souls.

With due reverence and respect, a dedicated son of the Holy See,

Kazimierz Ruszkiewicz
Vicar General of the Warsaw Archdiocese

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, p. 15, copy, in Latin.

[1] See Document 18.
[2] See Document 22.

Appendix 2: Request of J. Matulewicz, the General's plenipotentiary, to Pius X, for approval of the constitutions

St. Petersburg, April 10, 1910

Holy Father,

On behalf of the Superior General of the Marian Brothers Institute of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, by whom I was authorized to handle the matters of the Order at the Holy See, falling at the feet of Your Holiness, I humbly implore that Your Holiness may wish to recognize again this Institute which has begun to revive as well as to approve for 10 years the constitutions which have recently been amended and composed in accordance with the Standards issued by the Holy Congregation for the Religious in 1901. They have also been adapted to the very difficult conditions of monastic life in our countries.[1]

Your most humble servant in Christ, the dedicated son of Your Holiness,

Reverend Jerzy M[atulewicz]

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, p. 16, copy, in Latin.

[1] Institutum Fratrum Marianorum sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, Petropoli 1910.

Appendix 3: Memorandum of J. Matulewicz for the Holy See concerning the Institute of the Marian Fathers

[St. Petersburg, April 10, 1910][1]

Concerning the beginning and condition of the Marian Institute of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary.The Institute of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary was established by the Reverend Servant of God Stanislaw Papczynski. He laid the foundation for the Congregation in Puszcza Korabiewska [the Korabiewo Forest] in 1679 with the consent of the Bishop of Poznan, Stefan Wierzbowski. This Congregation, originally with simple vows, had as its mission the sanctification of the monks themselves, propagation of worship of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, teaching religion to children along with their basic education, and extending help to the diocesan clergy. When the Congregation was expanded, it obtained approval of the Holy See in 1701 during the Pontificate of Pope Innocent XII. He ordered the profession of solemn vows and gave it the *Rule of Emulation of the Ten Virtues or Ten Preferences of the Most Holy Virgin Mary* approved by Popes Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X. The Congregation and its constitutions were approved again by Innocent XIII in 1723 and finally by Pius VI in 1786, who also decreed that the Congregation, until then attached to the Franciscan Observants, be severed and declared independent of that Order.[2]

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[1] No date on the original. The draft is dated September 10, 1910 (LVA). Since the memorandum was sent to Rome in May of 1910 (Document 30, Appendix 1), therefore the date should be April 10, 1910, which was when Rev. Matulewicz was preparing the documents for the Congregation of the Religious.

[2] These data have been drawn from the introduction to "Regula imitationis decem beneplacitorum seu decem virtutum B. Virginis Mariae [...] Romae 1778, pp. V-VI and from the breve of Pius VI "Ex debito Pastoralis Officii" dated March 3, 1786, included in "Constitutiones Apostolicae pro Ordine Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae Clericorum Regularium Marianorum." [...] Romae 1787, pp. II-IV, XXI-XXII. Among the purposes of the Congregation, there is no mention of the particular task of helping the souls in Purgatory. Probably the author followed the example of the breve "Ex debito Pastoralis Officii" where this purpose of the Marians was also omitted.

The Congregation of Marian Fathers spread considerably in Poland and Lithuania, and it owned 12 monasteries and houses. It has also established houses in five localities in Portugal where the religious, mostly coming from Poland, were committed to the salvation of their neighbors. In 1864, the Congregation was abolished by the Russian government. In 1909, only a single monastery in Mariampole in the diocese of Sejny remained, with only one monk, the Superior General.

In the same year, 1909, with the gracious permission and consent of the Holy See and despite extremely difficult conditions, the Congregation began its Renewal. In 1909, in accordance with a Response from the Holy Congregation of the Religious,[3] the Suffragan Bishop of Warsaw admitted two candidates[4] to the Congregation and in January of 1910, by consent of the Ordinary of Sejny, the Superior General accepted three more.[5] Thus, at present, the Institute of the Marian Brothers consists of six priests; one of them has made permanent vows, one temporary vows, one is in the novitiate and three others will soon begin their novitiate. Moreover, there are six aspirants. The temporary novitiate is located in St. Petersburg.

The Institute owns the following: in Mariampole — a monastery with its church, building, books, livestock, and other household inventory, and moreover approx. 27,000 rubles; in St. Petersburg — a library and various household items and money in the amount of 6,710 rubles.

I confirm the trustworthiness of the above with my own signature.

Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz

ACIVCSVA, S 25, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

[3] See Document 18.
[4] See Document 22.
[5] See Document 27, note 8.

Appendix 4: Letter of the Chapter Vicar of the Mohylev Archdiocese Stefan Denisewicz to Pius X recommending the Congregation of Marian Fathers

St. Petersburg, April 16, 1910

Holy Father,

The Institute of Marian Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary approved in 1701 by Pope Innocent XII, in 1723 by Pope Innocent XIII and in 1786 by Pope Pius VI, despite extremely difficult conditions, is presently undergoing a revival and begins to grow.

In our parts, a great need is felt for monastic institutes, especially male ones. As the purity of faith, exemplary conduct, and pastoral zeal of priests who chose this kind of life for themselves is well known to me, I trust that the revived Institute of Marian Brothers will become very useful and it will be helpful to our Mother the Church and for the saving of souls. This is even more likely as the Marian Brothers have rearranged their old constitutions in accordance with the Standards published by the Holy Congregation for the Religious and they have taken care to adapt them to the new conditions of life in our countries. Considering all this, I believe this Institute deserves to be re-approved and reconfirmed by the Holy See.

To confirm this, we have issued this letter and we have affixed our signature hereto.

The most humble servant in Christ and dedicated son of the Holy Holy See,

Stefan Denisewicz
Bishop, Chapter Vicar in Mohylev[1]

AGM, IG, Documenta Renovationis, copy, in Latin.

[1] See Document 12, note 5.

Appendix 5: Institutum Fratrum Marianorum sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, Petropoli 1910

Text not given.

No. 29. Letter from Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Religious R. Caroli to Rev. J. Matulewicz concerning missing documents

Rome, April 22, 1910

Reverend Father,

Only the Chapter Vicar of Sejny has sent his letter of recommendation to this Holy Congregation.[1] Letters of recommendation are still outstanding from the Reverend Bishops Ordinary of Mohylev and Warsaw as well as from the still living Superior General.

Moreover, please send to this Holy Congregation both the old and the new constitutions.

Please forgive me that I reply only after such a long time.[2]

Taking this opportunity, Father, I wish you all the best luck.

Sincerely,

Rodolfo Caroli[a]

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 27, p. 18, original, in Latin.

[1] See Document 26.

[2] This is a reply to the letter from Rev. Matulewicz of February 7, 1910 (Document 27). Prelate Caroli had not yet received the letter of April 27, 1910, with the Appendices (Document 28) which was already dispatched through private channels and delivered to the Congregation in May.

[a] Rev. Buczys made the following note in Latin on the original: "There was the following note on the envelope: 'Monsieur l'abbé G. Matulewicz, Ile de Basile I linie (sic) N. 52, St. Petersburg.' The envelope was closed with a paper label with the seal of the Holy Congregation of the Religious whose name could be clearly read on the seal." (The handwriting identifies the author.)

No. 30. Cover letter sent by Rev. J. Matulewicz with the dispatched documents to [Undersecretary of the Congregation of the Religious R. Caroli][1]

St. Petersburg, September 1, 1910

Reverend Prelate,

Thank you very much for the letter you were kind enough to send me in May of this year.

Because of the difficulties to which monastic life and contacts with the Holy See are subjected in our countries, I could not quickly send the necessary documents: the Rule and the old constitutions of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary as well as the petition by the Superior of the Order himself.

Taking advantage of the opportunity that has presented itself, I am sending those documents while recommending the entire cause of our Order to your benevolence and generosity, Father Prelate.

If necessary, I intend to come to Rome next year during the summer holidays in order to provide the required explanations concerning the matters of our Order as well as to obtain information from the Holy Congregation for the Religious so that we don't dare to take any significant step in such important matters without the consent of the Holy See.

With all due respect to the Reverend Father Prelate, your humble servant,

Jerzy Matulewicz
Doctor of Theology, Member of the Congregation
of Marian Brothers
Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Theological
Academy in St. Petersburg

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

[1] The name of Caroli is not mentioned in the letter. The contents indicate that this is a reply to his letter of April 22, 1910 (Document 29).

Appendix 1: Petition by General W. Sekowski to Pius X for approval of new constitutions

Mariampole, August 7, 1910

Holy Father,

In May of this year, through our brother Jerzy Matulewicz, Professor of the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, whom I authorized to handle the affairs of our Institute, we sent to the Holy See certain documents concerning our Institute, namely: letters of recommendations from local Ordinaries, a short report on the history and condition of the Institute of Marian Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, as well as the statutes of said Institute which we have composed in accordance with the Response of the Holy Congregation of the Religious, taking into account the new conditions of life to which we are subject in our work and the most recent regulations of the Church.[1]

Herewith we are sending one more requested document, namely the law of *Ten Virtues of the Most Holy Virgin Mary*, in accordance with which life has been conducted in our Institute. We are also sending the old constitutions.

At the same time, falling to the feet of Your Holiness, Holy Father, I humbly implore that you deign to recognize again this Institute of ours which has been abolished by State laws but is presently revived amidst so many difficulties; and that you benevolently approve for 10 years our new statutes which we have sent.

Most humble and obedient son and servant of Your Holiness
Superior of the Institute of Marian Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary
Brother Wincenty Sekowski

(seal)

Please send the reply to:
M. l'abbé Matulewicz, professeur à l'Académie Catholique de St. Petersburg.

ACIVCSVA, p. 26.

[1] See Document 28 with appendices.

Appendix No. 2: Regula imitationis decem beneplacitorum seu decem virtutum B. Virginis Mariae Congregationis sub titulo ejusdem Immaculatae Conceptionis […], Romae 1779

Text not given.

Appendix 3: Regula imitationis decem beneplacitorum seu decem virtutum B. Virginis Mariae Congregationis sub titulo ejusdem Immaculatae Conceptionis […], Romae 1779

Text not given.

Appendix 4: Constitutiones Apostolicae pro Ordine Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae Clericorum Regularium Marianorum […], Romae 1787 reimpressae

Text not given.

No. 31. Decree of the Congregation of the Religious approving the reformed Institute of the Marian Fathers and its new constitutions

Rome, November 28, 1910

The Institute of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, established in the seventeenth century, was approved by Popes Innocent XII and Innocent XIII. Pius VI allowed the Marians to profess solemn vows.[1]

The aim of the Institute was to surround the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin with special worship and love, to commit themselves to the saving of souls, to teach the truths of faith, especially to the simple people, and to support by deeds of love the souls of the faithful who have died and are held in Purgatory.

[1] Actually, it was Innocent XII who, in 1669, allowed the Marians to profess solemn vows. In 1786 Pius VI separated their Order from the Minor Brothers, and in the following year he confirmed the changed constitutions and confirmed the privilege of exemption.

The Institute grew in Poland where it began, as well as in Portugal. It was beneficial to the Faith everywhere, but during the persecution rampant in the nineteenth century, it gradually broke down so much that currently one monk remains who was its Superior General.

Some diocesan clergy watched with pain as the Institute which once used to enjoy recognition was now heading for complete extinction, and with the consent and encouragement of the Bishops Ordinary of Mohylev, Warsaw, and Sejny, as well as of the surviving Superior General, they have dedicated themselves to strive for resurrection of the work, and, in accordance with the rules of this Holy Congregation of the Religious, they have fortunately achieved this. They only regarded it as necessary that the constitutions of the Institute be slightly modified so that in the future, taking the circumstances into consideration, solemn vows not be professed but simple ones, and that the service for the dead which was said daily according to the old constitutions, was benevolently replaced by worship by the monks specifically to support the souls in Purgatory but without imposing any particular obligation.

After the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Holy Congregation for the Religious described and presented this decree, together with the amended constitutions which precede it, to the Holy Father Pope Pius X at the audience on September 15, 1910, His Holiness benevolently deigned to bestow his approval upon the Institute thus reformed and upon said constitutions; and he allowed for a change of the service for the dead, preserving nevertheless the Apostolic Constitutions and jurisdiction by bishops, any other rules and regulations notwithstanding

Given in Rome, the 28th of November, 1910.

J. C. Cardinal Vives, Prefect

Donatus Archbishop of Ephesus, Secretary

(seal)

Printed in the appendix to: Constitutiones, pp. 366-367; the same text in: Elenchus domorum religiosarum et sodalium Congregationis

CC. RR. Marianorum sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis B.V.M. pro anno Domini 1926, Romae 1926, p. 6 (mimeographed); ACIVCSVA, p. 26, vol. 1, the minutes (disregarded) written by the hand of Undersecretary R. Caroli at the end of the approved "Constitutiones Instituti Fratrum Marianorum," containing editorial markings.

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

No. 32. Protocol of the election of Rev. J. Matulewicz as General of the Congregation of Marian Brothers

Gielgudyszki, July 14, 1911

Election of the Superior General

After the demise on the 10th day of April, 1911, of Wincenty Sekowski, Superior General of the Congregation of Monastic Priests[1] Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, we, the remaining professed brother priests: Jerzy Matulewicz, Jan Totoraitis, and Franciszek Buczys have elected Brother Jerzy Matulewicz to be the Most Honorable Brother Superior of the Congregation.

We confirm the truthfulness of the above.

Jerzy Matulewicz
Franciszek Buczys
Jan Totoraitis

(seal)

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

[1] In the original: Congregationis CC.RR. Fratrum Marianorum.

No. 33. Request by Rev. J. Matulewicz to Pope Pius X for his confirmation as the General of the Congregation

Rome, November, 15, 1911

Holy Father!

Jerzy Matulewicz, Doctor of Theology, who after the demise on the 10th of April, 1911, of Father Wincenty Sekowski was elected by the remaining brothers as the Superior of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary prostrates himself at the feet of Your Holiness, most humbly requesting your benevolent confirmation in this office.

Jerzy Matulewicz, hitherto a professor of Dogmatic Theology and inspector or Vice Director of the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, has after his election renounced all these obligations and moved to Fribourg in Switzerland so as to be able to commit himself wholly to the revived Congregation of Marian Fathers.

The most humble servant in Christ and most dedicated son of Your Holiness,

Jerzy Matulewicz

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

No. 34. Request of General J. Matulewicz to Pius X for permission to move the novitiate from St. Petersburg to Fribourg

Rome, November 15, 1911

Holy Father!

Jerzy Matulewicz, Doctor of Theology, Superior of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, prostrating himself at the feet of Your Holiness after having obtained consent of his council, and with the

permission of the Ordinariate, humbly requests Papal consent to move the novitiate from St. Petersburg to Fribourg in Switzerland.

The reason for the move is that, as we are taught by experience, because of unjust laws, novitiate in Russia can be pursued only with the greatest difficulty, especially if a large number of priests as candidates is involved.

The humble servant and most dedicated son of Your Holiness,

Jerzy Matulewicz

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

Appendix: Consent of the Apostolic Administrator of the Lausanne and Geneva Diocese, J. Abbet, to open a house of study and the novitiate of the Congregation of Marian Brothers in Fribourg

Fribourg, November 8, 1911

The Congregation of Marian Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, established in the seventeenth century in the Polish Kingdom, approved by Popes Innocent XII, XIII as well as Pius VI, has grown widely in the Polish Kingdom and in Portugal. However, in the nineteenth century it has been almost completely destroyed by persecution in Russia. With the consent and personal involvement of the Bishops Ordinary of Mohylev, Warsaw, and Sejny, as well as the surviving Superior General, several diocesan priests, with the consent of the Holy See, have dedicated themselves completely to the Renewal of the almost extinct work, even more so because in the Russian Empire clerical monastic congregations are highly desirable.

His Holiness Pope Pius X benevolently deigned to confirm this revived Congregation and its slightly modified constitutions on September 15, 1910.

The general purpose of the Congregation is to sanctify its own members by keeping the three simple vows; while the specific purpose is to carry out works of love toward God and fellow men, especially pursuing studies and care for the progress of knowledge, teaching others, especially simple people, and in general being committed in any way whatsoever to the salvation and perfection of their fellow souls.

Experience has soon revealed that in Russia there are great impediments to pursuing a novitiate in an appropriate manner, especially if a large number of candidates is involved. Therefore, the Marian Brothers decided to move the novitiate to Fribourg in Switzerland so that candidates could go through it freely as well as study at the University during their sojourn and thereafter return to Russia and work in the Lord's vineyard.

After obtaining oral consent from the Most Splendid Ordinariate, the Marian Brothers opened a house for the period of novitiate and studies in the Religious House of Canisianum. I hereby request the Most Splendid Ordinariate to extend such grace and to express its consent in writing so that this can be presented in Rome to the Holy Congregation of the Religious.

With due respect and deference, your humble servant in Christ,
Fribourg in Switzerland, Canisianum
on the 6th day of November, 1911

Jerzy Matulewicz,
Doctor of Theology

I have seen, approved and supported,
Fribourg in Switzerland on the 8th of November 1911

+ Joseph Abbet
Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Lausanne and Geneva
Titular Bishop of Bethlehem, Prior of St. Maurice

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

No. 35. Request of General J. Matulewicz to Pius X for permission to perform also the obligations of the Novice Master

Rome, November 17, 1911

Holy Father!

Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary prostrating himself at the feet of Your Holiness, requests most humbly that he might for some time also perform the obligations of the Novice Master until someone appropriate is prepared from among candidates joining the Congregation.

The Congregation of Marian Fathers has been brought to almost complete extinction by persecution rampant in Russia. At present, revived owing to the generous consent of the Holy See, it has only three professed fathers. Therefore, it is impossible to designate a special Novice Master.

Humble servant in Christ and most dedicated son,
Jerzy Matulewicz

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

No. 36. Request of Gen. J. Matulewicz to Pope Pius X to recognize oral consent by Bishops Ordinary for candidates to the Congregation as sufficient

Rome, November 17, 1911

Holy Father,

Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, prostrating himself at the feet of Your Holiness, requests humbly that in the Russian Empire where the Catholic Church, restricted by unjust laws, finds itself in a difficult situation, Your Holiness benevolently deign

to regard as sufficient substitute for certifications issued in writing, such certifications as local Bishops Ordinary are pleased to give to candidates to the Congregation orally but refuse to issue in writing fearing unfortunate consequences from the lay authorities. The Congregation would request such certificates from Ordinaries by intermediary of their brothers or by other serious members of the clergy who would apply for said certificates from the Ordinaries in person.

Your humble servant in Christ and most dedicated son,
Jerzy Matulewicz

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin.

No. 37. Response of the Congregation for the Religious confirming Rev. J. Matulewicz in the office of General

Rome, November 25, 1911

Holy Father,

Jerzy Matulewicz, Doctor of Theology, elected by the remaining brothers as the Superior of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary after the demise on the 10th of April, 1911, of Wincenty Sekowski, prostrates himself at the feet of Your Holiness, most humbly requesting your benevolent confirmation in this office.

Based on the special authority delegated by Your Holiness, the Holy Congregation of the Religious, considering the reasons put forward, has graciously granted the submitted request.[1]

J.C. Cardinal Vives, Prefect
D[onatus], Archbishop of Ephesus, Secretary
(seal)

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 142, p. 9, original, in Latin, No. 6095/11

[1] This is a reply to the request contained in Document 33.

No. 38. Response of the Congregation for the Religious allowing Rev. J. Matulewicz to perform the function of Novice Master

Rome, November 25, 1911

Holy Father!

Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, prostrating himself at the feet of Your Holiness, requests humbly that he may for some time also perform the obligations of the Novice Master until someone appropriate is prepared from among candidates joining the Congregation.

Based on the special authority delegated by Your Holiness, the Holy Congregation of the Religious, considering the reasons put forward, has graciously granted the submitted request.[1]

J.C. Cardinal Vives, Prefect
D[onatus], Archbishop of Ephesus, Secretary

seal

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 142, p. 11, original, in Latin, No. 6248/11.

[1] This is a reply to the request contained in Document 35.

No. 39. Response of the Congregation of the Religious to recognize oral consent by Bishops Ordinary for candidates to the Congregation as sufficient

Rome, November 25, 1911

Holy Father,

Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, prostrating himself at the feet of Your Holiness, requests humbly that in the Russian Empire where the Catholic Church, restricted by unjust laws,

finds itself in a difficult situation, Your Holiness benevolently deign to regard as sufficient substitute for certifications issued in writing, such certifications as local Bishops Ordinary are pleased to give to candidates to the Congregation orally but refuse to issue in writing fearing unfortunate consequences from the lay authorities. The Congregation of Marian Fathers will try to obtain such certificates from Ordinaries by intermediary of their brothers or by other serious members of the clergy who would apply for said certificates from the Ordinaries in person.

Based on the special authority delegated by Your Holiness, the Holy Congregation of the Religious, considering the reasons put forward, extend this grace for a period of 10 years provided that the orally granted certifications subsequently are written down by the recipient and sworn.[1]

J.C. Cardinal Vives, Prefect
D[onatus], Archbishop of Ephesus, Secretary

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin, No. 6187/11.

[1] This is a reply to the request contained in Document 36.

No. 40. Response of the Congregation of the Religious allowing the move of the novitiate from St. Petersburg to Fribourg

Rome, November 28, 1911

Holy Father!

Superior of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, prostrating himself at the feet of Your Holiness, with the support of his council, and with the permission of the local Ordinary, humbly requests Papal consent to move the novitiate from St. Petersburg to Fribourg in Switzerland.

Based on the special authority delegated by Your Holiness, the Holy Congregation of the Religious graciously grants the submitted request provided that there is consent of the local Ordinary and that all that is required by law will be preserved.[1]

J.C. Cardinal Vives, Prefect
A. Cherubini, Undersecretary

(seal)

LVA, set 1676, inv. 1, vol. 142, p. 13, origina,l in Latin, No. 6096/11.

[1] This is a reply to the request contained in Document 34.

No. 41. "Brief Memorandum concerning the Marian Fathers" by General J. Matulewicz to the Bishop of Krakow, Adam Sapieha

Krakow, May 29, 1914

Brief Memorandum concerning the Marian Fathers

I have the honor to humbly declare to the Most Reverend Bishop of Krakow concerning the Marian Fathers as follows:

1) The Marian Fathers have never ceased to exist legally; after the death of Father General Wincenty Sekowski those Marians who were in touch with him elected as their Superior General Father Jerzy Matulewicz who was confirmed by the Holy See.

2) The Holy See has reconfirmed the Marian statutes adapted to the Standards of the Holy Congregation and to the difficult conditions in which the Marians had to work under the Russian occupation.

3) Concerning the movement initiated by Mr. J[ozef] St[anislaw] Pietrzak in order to resurrect the Marian Fathers, I declare that I would by no means desire to be an impediment to the noble strivings of good people if they are directed by the divine spirit and if their movement was legitimized by the Church authorities.

4) As the Marians do not need resurrection and exist and grow legally, and fearing lest the Church institution conferred to my leadership be harmed in any way because of the movement initiated by Mr. J. St. Pietrzak, I humbly ask:

a) that a thorough investigation of persons attempting to create Marian Fathers in Galicia be ordered;

b) that it be ascertained why they don't want to join the legally existing Marian Fathers functioning based on statutes bestowed by the Holy See;

c) on what legal grounds Mr. Pietrzak and his associate appear as Marians.

5) I humbly request that this movement be given legal direction as indicated by canon law to designate an appropriate spiritual leader for this group of people whom they would obey in everything and who would look over their activities, in particular so that by their publications of a strongly national character and by their too-noisy agitation they brought no harm to the Institute of Marian Fathers existing legally and working mainly under the Russian occupation in such harsh and difficult conditions.

6) I request that this document be kept secret, not disclosed or published, so that the work of the Marian Fathers would not be made more difficult under Russian occupation.

With deepest reverence and respect,

Your servant in Christ,

Father Jerzy Matulewicz
Superior General of the Marian Fathers

LVA, set 1674, inv. 2, vol. 50, p. 3, copy, in Polish.

No. 42. Letter by the Bishop of Podlasie, Henryk Przezdziecki, to the Congregation for the Religious concerning possible transfer of the Marian Fathers in Gozlin to Jozef Pietrzak and his associates

Siedlce, December 10, 1927

The Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary (the Marians) used to own two homes in the diocese of Podlasie and was especially dedicated to propagating the pious practices of bringing help to the souls detained in Purgatory. This practice has become precious for the faithful of our diocese to such degree that traces of special aid for the dead, especially those who have given their life in the defense of the Faith, have been preserved until this day.

In 1864 all monastic orders in the diocese of Podlasie were abolished and their members expelled from the diocese. After the diocese of Podlasie was reinstated in 1918, I saw nothing more important than that I might revive centers of monastic life in the diocese. Therefore, when I was approached by monks from the Congregation of Marian Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, I was glad to return to them the Marian house in Skorzec and I encouraged them also to take over the second house in Gozlin where the local parish established a long time ago at the local church was still in existence. The Marian Fathers excused themselves by insufficient number of monks and until this day they have failed to take over the house in Gozlin, while the Church — once Marian — is still serviced by the diocesan parson.

Soon I found out that the Marian Fathers have had their constitutions changed by the Holy See, and that the mourning office and the special service for the dead have been omitted[1] and by decree of the Holy See (Congregation of the Religious, November 28, 1910, No. 3544/09),[2] the

[1] False information. See Response of the Congregation of the Religious of April 25, 1928 (Document 43, Section 5).

[2] See Document 31.

entire Institute was approved with some changes in comparison with the old constitutions of the ancient Marians approved by Popes Innocent XII and XIII.

During the past month, I was approached by a certain Stanislaw Pietrzak, professed brother of the Congregation of Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary of the Marian Brothers, declaring that he was accepted together with others by the last Marian in 1913. He asked that he and his associates might lead communal life in the diocese of Podlasie in accordance with those old constitutions confirmed by Popes Innocent XII and Innocent XIII. I have the best reports concerning said Stanislaw Pietrzak. It would be very desirable that the Marian Congregation based on the old constitutions could be renewed in the Diocese of Podlasie. It would replenish the shortage of monks in the diocese. It would receive the Marian House in Gozlin and most importantly it would promote and constantly stimulate the practice, so dear to the faithful, of prayer for the dead who gave their lives for the Faith. Therefore I would be most happy to accept the members of this Order into the diocese.

Therefore, I request responses from the Holy Congregation:

1. Was the Marian Congregation dissolved by the Holy See on account of the reform of the constitutions of the Marian Fathers performed by the decree of November 28, 1910, No. 3544/09?

2. Are those Marians of the old observance allowed to conduct communal life in the diocese of Podlasie in accordance with the unreformed constitutions approved by Popes Innocent XII and Innocent XIII?

If some special consent of the Holy See is required, I humbly request and implore that such consent, for the good of the Church, graciously not be refused.

Submitting all this with deep reverence and humility, I sign as the most dedicated servant in Christ.

+ Henryk Przezdziecki
Bishop of Siedlce or Podlasie[3]

ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, original, in Latin, No. 7079.

[3] Przezdziecki, Henryk Ignacy (1875-1939), Bishop of Podlasie from 1918 to 1939, (PSB, XXIX, pp. 68-70).

No. 43. Response of the Congregation for the Religious to the Bishop of Podlasie H. Przezdziecki explaining the 1910 reform of the Marian Brothers Institute

Rome, April 25, 1928

Most Eminent Reverend Bishop,

This Holy Congregation, having seriously considered and thoroughly investigated everything, has decided to answer to the letter of Your Eminence from December 10 of last year[1] as follows:

1) Because by the decree of this Holy Congregation No. 3544/09[2] as is indicated by its contents the old Order of Marian Brothers was transformed into an Institute with simple vows, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the Order in its old form with solemn vows as well as a Rule and constitutions ceased to exist as of the day on which the quoted Decree was promulgated, i.e. as of the 28th of November, 1910.

2) Such transformation of the aforementioned Marian Order should not be understood as if some new and quite different Institute was established by the Holy See in place of that Order as seems to be suggested by Your Excellency's letter. The aforementioned decree does not in fact concern the creation of some new community but deals with guaranteeing the further existence and continuation of the same Marian Institute which because of evil conditions was brought almost to complete extinction. For this purpose, considering the circumstances of place and time, by the same Decree this Holy Congregation changed solemn vows to simple ones in the Marian Institute as well as adjusted its old constitutions appropriately.

Therefore, the transformed Marian Order is a legitimate continuation, although in a new form, of the former, legally identical Marian Order established in the seventeenth century.

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[1] See Document 42.

[2] See Document 31.

3) That having been said, it is obvious that:

a. Said laymen, a certain Stanislaw Pietrzak and his associates, mentioned in the Reverend Bishop's letter, were unlawfully accepted to the former Marian Order in 1913 because at that time said Order did not legally exist as such.

b. Nor can they lead communal life in accordance with the old Marian constitutions which no longer have any legal power.

c. They must not call themselves Marians.

4) If Your Excellency intended to create a new order from these persons with the purpose of praying for the dead, then you should proceed in accordance with the terms of the Code of Canon Law and with the Standards issued by the Holy Congregation on March 6, 1921.[3]

5) However, this Holy Congregation would rather advise that those men who cherish such sentiment toward the Marian Order and feel so much sympathy toward the souls retained in Purgatory seek contact with the Marian Institute in which, as it is stated, the pious practice of prayer for the dead is continuing, although there is no strict obligation of common office for the dead.

Having communicated the above to Your Excellency in fulfillment of my obligation, I ask God for only joy for the Reverend Bishop, with an expression of special reverence.

Sincerely,
Vincenzo La Puma, Secretary[4]

AGM, IG, Mariani Albi, copy notarized by the Congregation for the Religious on November 11, 1960, in Latin, No. 8290/27.

[3] Normae secundem quas Sacra Congregatio de Religiosis in novis religiosis congregationibus approbandis procedere solet, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 13: 1921, pp. 312-319.

[4] La Puma, Vincenzo (1874-1943), Secretary and in later years Cardinal and Prefect of the Congregation for the Religious.

No. 44. Decree of the Congregation for the Religious confirming the privilege of exemption for the Marian Brothers Institute

Rome, April 26, 1929

The current Superior General of the Marian Brothers for the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary has recently submitted a request[1] asking that in order to remove all doubt in such an important matter, an express declaration be issued concerning exception once granted to said Institute by Pope Pius VI based on the Breve Iniuncti Nobis of March 27, 1787, of which there is no mention in the decree of said Holy Congregation for the Religious from November 28, 1910, No. 3544/09,[2] based on which, after the solemn vows were changed into simple ones, certain changes were introduced into the constitutions of the Marian Fathers Institute, more appropriate for the circumstances of place and time.

After careful consideration of all this, the Holy Congregation for the Religious affirms and sets forth by form and contents of this decree that the above mentioned privilege of exemption, the transformation of the Institute by the aforesaid decree of November 28, 1910, notwithstanding, remains in effect.

With preservation of other regulations. Any other decrees notwithstanding.

Alexis Henri M. Cardinal Lepicier OSM[3]
Prefect
Vincenzo La Puma, Secretary

AGM, IG, Documenta renovationis, Exemptio, original, in Latin, No. 8290/26 S 26.

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[1] AGM.

[2] See Document 31.

[3] Lepicier, Alexis Henri Marie (1863-1936), in 1927 became a Cardinal and soon after the Prefect of the Congregation for the Religious.

No. 45. Decree of the Congregation for the Religious approving the constitutions of the Marian Brothers Institute

Rome, January 27, 1930

His Holiness, by God's grace Pope Pius XI, at the audience given to the below-signed Secretary of the Holy Congregation for the Religious on the 27th of January, 1930, graciously deigned to approve and confirm the constitutions of the Marian Brothers Institute of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary previously approved by Pope Pius X by decree of this Holy Congregation on the 28th of November, 1910, and presently adapted to the Code of Canon Law after introduction of numerous changes and amendments at the request of the General Chapter of the above mentioned Institute, verified by this Holy Congregation as it is recorded in this copy, the original of which is found in the archives of the Holy Congregation, which is approved and confirmed by the form and contents of this present Decree; always with the preservation of jurisdiction by local Bishops Ordinary in accordance with the rules of the Canons and and Apostolic Constitutions.

Any other decrees notwithstanding.

Alexis Henri M. Cardinal Lepicier OSM
Prefect
Vincenzo La Puma, Secretary

Official print: Constitutiones, p. 329-330; ACIVCSVA, S 26, vol. 1, copy included at the end of the typescript of notarized "Constitutiones," No. 7497/29.

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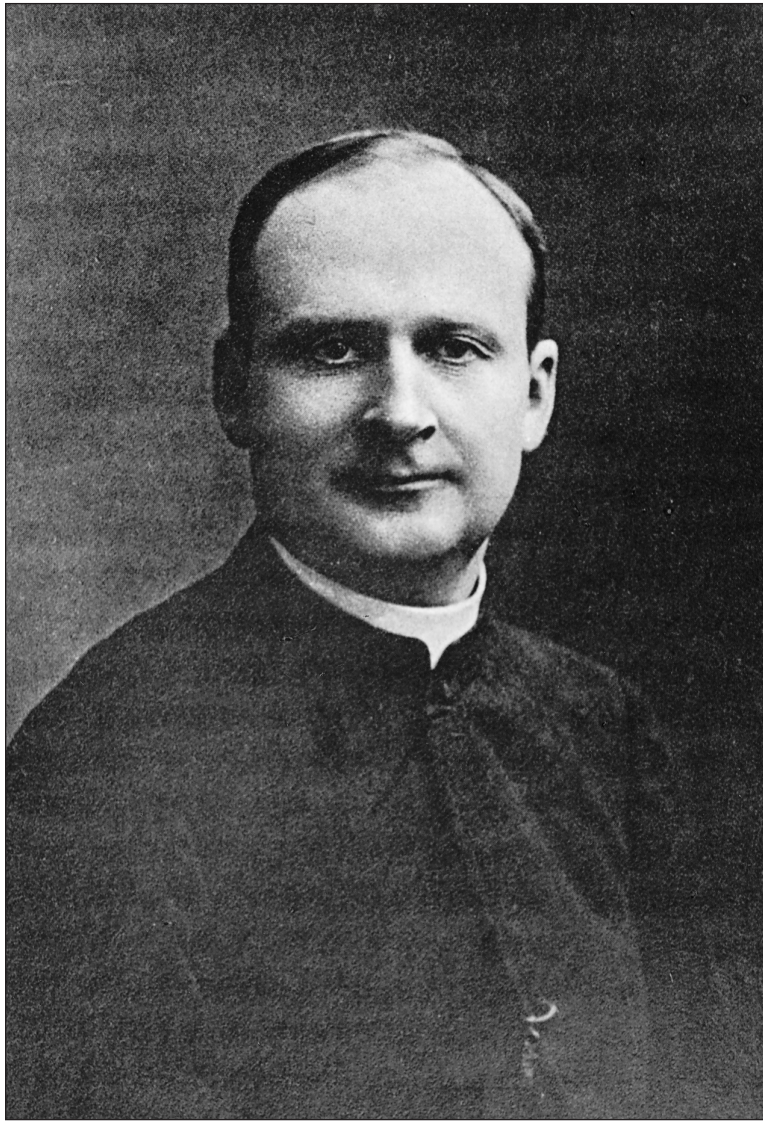
Father Wincenty Sekowski,
General of the Marians during Renewal of the Congregation.

The church and monastery in Mariampole, as it looked before 1939.
It was the only Marian site after the abolition in 1864.

Rev. Jerzy Matulewicz, the Renovator of the Marians.
Photograph from between 1911 and 1913.



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He helped to organize the revived Congregation.

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